RELIGIO STOICI.

With a Friendly

ADDRESSE

To the

PHANATICKS

Of all *sects* and *sorts*.

By Sir George Mackenzie

Acts 1. 11.

—Ye men of Galile, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?

EDENBURGH,

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Of all Sects and Sorts.

By Sir George Mackenzie

Advocat.

— To turn of Cicilo, may I find
Some sap in Stoicism?

THE STOICKS Friendly ADDRESSE To the PHANATICKS Of all Sects and Sorts.

The mad-cap Zealots of this bigot Age, intending to mount Heaven, Elias-like, in Zeals fiery Chariot, do, like foolish Phaeton, not only fall themselves from their flaming seat, but by their furious over-driving, involve the world in unquenchable combustions; and when they have thus set the whole Globe on a blaze, this they term a new light. *It is remarkable in Scripture, that* Jehu, *who drove furiously, called up* Jehonadab *to see what zeal he had*

for the houſe of God, was even at that inſtant, doing it more wrong then ever was done to it by unconcerned Gallio, who flantingly cared for none of theſe things. And that none of all the Apoſtolick Conclave deſired ever fire might rain from above upon miſ-believers; except the Sons of Zebedee, who immediately thereafter, arrivid at that pitch of vanity, as to deſire to ſit in Heaven upon Chriſt's right and left hand. And that Peter, who was the firſt who did draw a Sword in his Maſters quarrel, was likewayes the firſt who denyed him. Fiery Zeal blazes ſoon upon ſuch combuſtible matter as the Sons of Zebedee; and that flaſh being ſpent and evaporat, a fall follows, as befell Peter. As that body is hardly curable, which entertains ſuch ill-ſuited neighbours as a cold Stomach and a hot Liver; So, the body of the viſible Church may be now concluded to be in a very diſtempered condition, when it's Charity waxeth cold, and its Zeal hot, beyond what is due to either; and theſe feveriſh fits of unnatural Zeal, wherewith the Church is troubled in it's old and cold age, betokens too much that it draws near it's laſt period.

The inconſiderableneſs likewayes of our differences, and inconſideratneſs wherewith they

they are perſuad, induces me to belie
their Zeal now a-la-mode, is not th
Fire which is kindled by a coal f
Altar, but is that ignis fatuus, *or w*
which is but a Meteor pic'd up of m
Vapours, and is obſerved to frequent C
yards oftner then other places.

I am none of thoſe who acknowl
temples, *beſides theſe of their own*
And I am of opinion, that ſuch as thi
they have a Church within their own
ſhould likewayes believe, that their h
ſteeples, and ſo ſhould provide them wit
I believe that there is a Church-m
which, like the Ark muſt lodge in it
all ſuch as are to be ſaved from the
condemnation: but, to chalk out its bo
lines, is beyond the Geography of my R
He was infallible who compared God's
to the wind which bloweth wh
lifteth; we hear the ſound of i
know not whence it comes, or wh
it goeth. *And the name graven u*
white-ſtone, none knows but he who h
Eli *concluded* Hannah *to be drunk*
ſhe was powring out her ſoul befo
Maker: and Elias *believed, that the C*
in his days, was ſtinted to his own

and yet God told him, that there were ſeven thouſand in Iſrael *who had not bowed their knees to* Baal: *why then ſhould any private Chriſtian determine, magiſterially, that, wherein the greateſt of Prophets erred?*

The reed wherewith the Temple was to be meaſured, Rev. 11. 2. *was only entruſted to an Angel; and yet he had not in commiſſion* to meaſure the Court that was without, becauſe it was given to the Gentiles. *And albeit,* Rev. 7. *the number of the Jews who were ſaved is determined; yet, the number of Gentiles is left indefinit, and ſaid to be numberleſs.*

There is nothing more ordinary, then for each Nation to confine the Church within themſelves. And in that Nation again, one corner will have themſelves the Sanctum Sanctorum *of that only Temple; albeit our Saviour in his Goſpel aſſures us, that men ſhall come from all corners of the world, and ſit down with* Abraham, Iſaac & Jacob. *And* John *in his* Revelation *tells us, that multitudes of all Nations, Kindreds and Families, were ſeen following the Lamb. Upon this ſame block do theſe likeways ſtumble, who put the bolt of their uncharitableneſs upon*

upon the gates of Heaven, to debar whole Professions, such as Lawyers and Physitians, from entring in thereat; notwithstanding that the above cited place tells us, that there were only twelve thousand of the tribe of Levi the Priest chosen, and the like number was pricke in the tribe of Judah, the Law-giver: Aaron the Priest did mould the golden Calf, and not Moses the Judge; and Korah and Dathan were Levites, and yet mutined against their Magistrates.

I say not this to disparage that holy Function: For none shall wish Aarons rod to flourish more then my self; and ordinarily, these who love not to touch the Lords annointed, will likewayes be sure, to do His Prophets no harm; but, I say it to take off an aspersion which hath stain'd too long, and too injustly, those of my own profession. Is not the Church our common Mother? albeit, I confess, she is likewayes their Nurse, in a more particular way; and since there is Heavenly Mannah enough to alimen't us all, why should Christians deny to admit their brethren to an equal partage?

It grieves me sore to see my Mother the Church tortur'd like Rebecca, by carrying

ſtragling twins in her pained bowels. And ſeeing all Chriſtians are but pilgrims here, I admire that theſe pilgrims ſhould leave off to journey, and ſtand skirmiſking and fighting with all ſuch as will not travel their road. And albeit we acknowledge, that the Spirit of God takes paines, and is ſufficient for leading all men in the way wherein they ſhould walk; yet, we muſt compell them, as if either He needed our help, or we reſolved to ſhare with him the glory of their converſion. Thus God (who loves us all infinitly better then any one of us doth another) leaves us, upon our own hazard, a freedom in our choice, albeit we poor miſcreants compell one another, denying to our fellow-creatures that freedom which he allowes all the Creation. I wiſh we would conſider how each man eats, drinks, cares for his family, and performes all common duties, rational enough without any compulſion; and yet, in the affairs of Religion, wherein doubtleſs man is led by a far more infallible aſſiſtance, there are many ſlips committed, daily and groſſly, notwithſtanding of all the pains taken, and force uſed by one man towards another. Thus it fairs with us as with Patients, whom when the Phyſitian ſtints to a narrow dyet, then they loath

loath even that food, which their unrefined appetite would never have rejected. And this makes me apt to believe, that if Laws and Law-givers did not make Hereticks vain, by taking too much notice of their extravagancies, the world should be no more troubled with these, then they are with the Chimeras of Alchymists *and* Philosophers. *And it fairs with them as with Tops, which, how long they are scourged, keep foot and run pleasantly, but fall how soon they are neglected and left to themselves.*

In order to which, it was wittily observed by our great King James *the Sixth, that the Puritans of his age strove with him, and yet ceded at first, in a difference between them and the Shoe-makers of* Edinburgh: *For, not only pleases it their humour to contend where they gain honour and can lose none, but likewayes, by contesting with Monarchs, they magnifie to the people their pious courage, assuring the world, that such attempts require a particular assistance from Heaven; and when their jangling hath extorted some concessions from the Magistrate, (as ordinarily it doth) then they press that successe*

as an infallible mark of the Jure-divi-noſhip *of their quarrel. Albeit, I confeſs, that when theſe, not only recede from the canonized Creed of the Church, but likewayes incroach uponthe Laws of the State, then, as of all others, they are the moſt dangerous; So, of all others, they ſhould be moſt ſeverely puniſhed.*

Opinion, kept within its proper bounds, is a pure act of the minde: and ſo it would appear, that to puniſh the body for that which is a guilt of the ſoul, is as unjuſt as to puniſh one relation for another. And this blood-thirſty zeal, which hath reigned in our age, ſuppoſes our moſt mercifull God to be of the ſame temper with theſe pagan Deities, who deſired to have their Altars gored with blood; and being devils themſelves, delighted in the deſtruction of men: whereas the Almighty, who delights not in the death of a ſinner, but rather that he ſhould repent and live, hath left no warrant upon holy Record, for perſecuting ſuch as diſſent from us; but even then when He commands that the Prophets, who tempt others to idolatry, ſhould be ſlain; yet, ſpeaks He nothing of puniſhing theſe who were ſeduced by them.

And

And why should we shew so much violence in these things whereof we can shew no certain evidence? as ordinarily we cannot in circumfundamental debates. Are we not ready to condemn to day, as Phanatick, what yesterday was judged Jure-divino? *And do not even those who persecuted others for their opinions, admire why they should be, upon that score, persecuted themselves? So that (victory depending upon event) we legitimate the persecutions, to be used by others, against our selves, by the persecutions used by our selves, against others. Our Saviour forbids us to pluck up the tares, lest the wheat be pulled up with it; and how can the most pious persecutors know, that the Saints are not destroyed with the Sinners?*

It is remarkable, that our Saviour disarmed zealous Peter, *even when he was serving Him in person, in His greatest straits, and against the profligat of His enemies, the Jews: and that to prevent the irregular zeal even of the first and best of Christians, the blessed Apostles, their divine Master thought it fit to arme them not with swords, but with scrips, and to root out of their hearts all thoughts of violence, did oft inculcate in them, that His King-*

dom

dom was not of this world, convincing them by an excellent argument, that He had no need of armes or armyes; for else He could have commanded thousands of Angels. Did ever God Command the Jewes to war against any neighbouring nation because they were Pagans (a quarrel which would have lasted till all the world had been conquered) Or, did our Saviour leave in legacie to his servants, that they should force others to turn proselytes, which doubtlesse he had done, if he had resolved to allow such a rude meanes of conversion? All which makes me admire, why in our late troubles, men really pious, and naturally sober, could have been so transported, as to destroy whom they could not convince, and to persuade those who were convinced, that Religion obliged them to destroy others.

My heart bleeds when I consider how scaffolds were dyed with Christian blood, and the fields covered with the Carkasses of murthered Christians; and its probable, that there were more damned by unprepared deaths, in the fields, then were saved by peeping Sermons in incendiary Churches; and in this, I admire the clemency of our Royal Master, who, albeit His cause was more just

just their theirs, when He might have convinced them by shewing to them their own practises: yet, hath rather chosen to command with His Scepter, then His Sword. But, if the glory of God were the mark at which these do levell, why bestow they not their zeal, rather in converting such as scarce know or acknowledge that there is a God? And why are they more enraged against these who agree with them in most things, then these who dissent from them in all? Take not Christians more pains to refute one another, then to convince Gentiles? And stand not some Episcopists and Presbyterians at greater distance, then either do with Turks and Pagans? And to evidence, that rather humour then piety occasions our differences, we may easily perceive, that the meaner the subject is, the heat is alwaies the greater.

If I had ever known so much as one whose faith had been the Trophy of a debate, I should allow of debates in matters of Religion: but seeing men cannot be convinced by miracles, it were ridiculous to presse conversion by arguments. All the Divines in Europe could not presse the best founded of their controverted and polemick truths, with so much scripture, or so many miracles as our blessed Savi-

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viour did His own divinity (which is the foundation of all truths) And yet the Jews and almoſt all the world beſides, ſleighted this infallible Doctrine; And to evidence that there is a ſeaſon of grace, independent from arguments, did not many thouſands turn proſelytes at Peter's *ſermon? whom all our Saviours homilies and miracles could not perſwade. If one ſhould ſay, that the teſtimony of a few fiſher-men ſhould not be believed in a matter of ſo great conſequence, as is the ſalvation of the whole world, eſpecially when they did depone as witneſſes, in a matter wherein both their honour and livelyhood was concerned, might not this ſtagger ſome mean Chriſtians? And yet I believe theſe truths ſo much the more, becauſe ſuch as theſe were its firſt aſſerters; for, certainly it is one of the greateſt of miracles, that ſo few, and ſo illiterate perſons were able to convince the whole world. Thus we ſee, that one may account that a miracle which another looks upon as a folly; and yet, none but God's Spirit can decide the controverſie. Matters of Religion and Faith, reſembling ſome curious Pictures, and Optick Priſmes, which ſeem to change ſhapes and colours, according to the ſeveral ſtandes from which the aſpicient views them.*

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The ballance of our judgments hath catched such a bruise by Adams *fall, that scarce can we by them know the weight of any argument. But, which is worse, there is as great a defect in our partial weighing, as in the scales themselves: For, when we take either the* pro *or* con *of any controversie into our Patronage, we throw always in arguments into that scale, wherein our own opinion lyes, without ever taking leisure to conclude what may be alledged for the antipode proposition: and then, when we receive an answer, our invention is busied, not in pondering how much conviction it hath in it, but by what slight it may be answered; and thus either passion, interest or frequent meditation, are still the weights which cast the ballance.*

This fiery zeal hath likewayes made another pimple flash out in the face of the phanetick Church, and that is, a conceit that the Saints have the only right to all Gods creatures, the wicked being only usurpers and not masters of them: But, I have heard this opinion (so beastly is it) confuted by Balaam's *Asse, who could tell it's Master,* Am not I thine own Asse? *When* Aaron *and the people did covenant without* Moses, *then every man did bring his ear-rings to make*

up

up the golden calf. And we have lived in an age, wherein we have ſeen our Countreymen, like the Chaldeans, *take the furniture both of the Tempel and of the Kings Houſe, and carry them away to their* Babylon *of confuſions; and in an age wherein ſober men were forced to lend monies, to buy for their own armes the heavy ſhackles of ſlavery,*

Tantum Religio potuit ſuadere malorum.

Religion doubtleſſe aims at two great deſignes; one is like the firſt Table, to perſwade us to adore God Almighty. Another is to perſwade us, like to the ſecond Table, to love our neighbour, and to be a meanto ſettle all theſe jealouſies, and compeſce all theſe animoſities which intereſt might occaſion: and this appears by the Doxology jubilyed by the Angels at our Saviour's birth, Glory to God, and peace and good-will towards men. *And therefore, as every private Chriſtian ſhould be tolerated by his fellow-ſubjects, to worſhip God inwardly according to his conſcience; So all ſhould conſpire in that exteriour uniformity of worſhip, which the Laws of his Countrey injoin. The firſt remark which God made of us after the Creation,*

tion, was, that it was not fit for man to be alone; there was only one Ark amongst the Jews by God's own appointment. And seeing the Gospel terms the Church Christ's Spouse, it were absurd to think that He will divorce from her upon every error or escape; especially, seeing His blessed mouth hath told us, that under the Gospel it is not lawful to divorce upon all occasions; and if He will not for these deny her to be His Spouse, much lesse should we deny her to be our Mother. May not one, who is convinced in his judgment, that Monarchy is the best of Governments, live happily in Venice or Holland? And that Travailer were absurd, who would rather squable with those amongst whom he sojourns, then observe those rites and solemnities which are required by the Laws of the places where he lives? What is once statured by a Law, we all consent to, in choosing Commissioners to represent us in those Parliaments where the Laws are made; and so if they ordain us to be decimated, or to leave the Nation if we conform not, we cannot say, when that Law is put to execution, that we are oppress; no more then we could complain, if one did remove us legally from those Lands

which he purchaſed from our Truſtee, whom we had impowred to ſell it.

As David *ſaid to* Saul, 1 Sam. 26. 20. *Why went the King out to catch a flea? So may I ſay to our great Divines, Why contravert they about ſhadows? Is it fit that Chriſtians, who find it too great a task to govern their private ſouls, ſhould be ſo much concerned how the Church is governed by others? Wherefore, ſeeing many have been ſaved who were moſt inexpert in theſe queſtions, and that fooliſh zeal, paſſion, and too much curioſitie therein, hath damned many, I may conclude, that to pry in theſe, is neither neceſſary, becauſe of the firſt, nor expedient, becauſe of the laſt.*

Since diſcretion opened my eyes, I have alwayes judg'd it neceſſary for a Chriſtian, to look oftner to his Practice of Piety, *then to his* Confeſſion of Faith; *and to fear more the crookedneſſe of his will, then the blindneſſe of his judgment; delighting more to walk on from grace to grace, working out the work of his own ſalvation with fear and trembling, then* to ſtand ſtill *with the Galileans curiouſly gazing up to heaven. True Religion and undefiled is to viſit the widow and the fatherleſſe; and the dit-*

tay

tay drawn up againſt the damned ſpirits ſhall be, That when our Saviour's poor ones were hungry, they did not feed them; when they were naked, they did not cloath them, without mentioning any thing of their unbelief in matters of Controverſie or Government. And therefore I hope, that theſe to whom I addreſs my ſelf in this Diſcourſe, will rather believe me to be their friend, becauſe of their piety, then their enemy, becauſe of their errors.

THE VIRTUOSO, OR STOICK.

CHAP. I.

Of Atheiſme.

ALbeit Man be but a ſtatue of duſt kneaded with tears, moved by the hid engines of his reſtleſs paſſions, a clod of earth, which the ſhorteſt feaver can burn to aſhes, and the leaſt ſhower of rhumes waſh away to nothing; Yet makes he as much noiſe in the world, as if both the Globes (thoſe glorious Twins) had been unwombed from that formleſs Chaos, by the midwifry of his wit; he ſpeakes

thunder, looks lightnings, breathes storms, and by the eloquence of his own vanity, perswades himself that his commands are able to unhinge the Poles. From which boundless pride, I confidently conclude, that if a natural instinct, or as the Stoicks terme it, προς θεον had not irresistibly bowed his faith to assent to a Deity, he had never, neither upon design nor in complyance to custom (as Atheists alledge) suffer'd to creep into his Creed, that there was one greater then himself, who could rein his affections, and bound their effects, according to the dictates of his irresistible will.

And albeit Regiments of Arguments, levyed both from the stately fabrick of heavens arched Pend, and from the inimitable embroidery of earths flowry Boul, be requisite for conquering the infidelity of others, and for rendring them tributaries to that all-forming Essence: Yet, doth my faith render up the arms of its depraved reason, and turn Proselyte to this divine truth, upon the sole sight of one of these dying Atheists; who, upon any surprisal, do with amazement throw up their eyes to heaven, as if they sent

sent their looks in ambassage to beg assistance from thence; and cry *God save me*, as if these beastly souls, when attaqued unexpectedly, knew whence their health were to be expected: Like to other sick brutes, whowhen assaulted by sickness, are, by the hand of that same storge & instinct, led to some herb or flower, which is an Apothecary shop appointed by nature for them.

Neither think I these arguments which are twisted together of three propositions so strong as these Instincts are; where truth, like the Sun, seems to dart home its light in one unperceivable act, whereas in these, pur-blind nature may be mistaken, not only judging of the truth of either of the three parts, but likewise of their connexion and alliance. I know that that miscreant, who began his Hell upon Earth, by being burnt at *Tholouse* for theorick Atheisme, did upon his first approach to the Fire, cry, *O God*: Whereupon, being taxt by the assisting Jesuit, answered, that these and such like expressions were the offsprings of custom: But poor soul he might have considered, that seeing he had crept from his cradle into that error, and

had run his glass to its last sand, in propagating that hellish conceit: That therefore this expression was rather a confession then an escape, rather a product of a rational soul, then of depraved custom; for as it was in it self a divine truth, so it was in him contrary to a setled habit.

There is another Caball of Atheists, who think that this Beleef was at first but the quaint *Leger-de-main* of some strongly-pated Statesman; who to over-awe the capriciousness of a giddy multitude, did forge this opinion of a rewarder of all humane actions: And to enforce this, do instance *Numa Pompilius*, and *Mahomet*, whose palpable cheats grew up in their successors into religions; and whose inventions were received with as much bigotry, by the wisest of men, as is that deity which is now the object of our adorations. Wherefore (say they) seeing the rational soul hath failed so oft, and so absurdly in its discoveries, how, or why should we submit our selves slavishly to its determinations? For that which doth at some times erre, can never at any time be concluded infallible.

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To these I answer, that albeit, as to the particular way of worship, the world is oft-times deluded: And albeit, even as to their apprehensions of this incomprehensible Essence, multitudes be sometimes misled; Yet, these staggering Fancies fix this great truth, *that there is a Superam who must be adored*: For if this innate Instinct did not coopere with these impostures, in gaining an assent to their fictitious Religious and Hierarchies, it were impossible for any humane authority to establish Principles so remote from reason, & to subjugate by these even the mildest tempers. But I take the root from which these errors do spring, to be, that the twilight of darkned reason glimsing to man that *impressa* of the divine Image, which though much decayed, yet rests still upon his soul; and not being able, because of the faintness of his light, and the decay of that divine *Impressa*, to discern exactly what that Deity is, with whose image it is signered, believes implicitely with a profound respect, any who hath the confidence to obtrude any knowledge of it upon them: Concluding in the conclave of their own thoughts, that

that none durſt contemn ſo far that omnipotent Thunder-darter, as to vend their own fancies for ſacred Oracles. And albeit theſe hood-winked Nations did erect a πανθεον in their own hearts wherein all theſe Vice-gods were worſhiped; Yet were all theſe but repreſentations of the true God; for His Omnipotency and Power was adored in their *Mars*; His omniſcience in their *Apollo*, *&c.* And it is very probable that the Heathens admired ſo each attribute of God Almighty, that they thought each deſerved diſtinct Altars; ſo that their errors had their riſe from rather too much then too little reſpect; and that as the ſame Ocean receives ſeveral names from the ſeveral ſhoars it waſhes, ſo, according to the ſeveral operations of the moſt High, did theſe deluded Pagans eſtabliſh ſeveral Deities. But that all theſe did ultimately terminate in one, is clear from the Inſcription of that Athenian Altar *To the unknown God*; from the deſignation of συμβουλοι, from their common feaſts or δεξιωσεις; from the adjunct of *Delphicus* given to *Apollo*, which in Greek ſignifies

signifies *unus*, as *Macrobius* observes, from their Altars erected, *Diisque Deabusque omnibus*, and from the general invocation of all the Deities jointly subjoyned to all their particular sacrifices. So that the great and all-comprehending *Idea*, wherein he is represented as in one big mirrour to us, was by them broke in pieces, and in each of these pieces taken alone did they see a Deity, though much abridged; Whereas all these pieces, when set together, did represent but one, and each piece did then shew but a part. But to evidence that our belief of a Deity is not a State and traditional imposture, I would willingly know if ever the skilfullest of Sathans emissaries was able to induce the world to believe that there was no God; which (doubtless) might have at some occasions contributed much to some mens Politick designs, and which that rebell would have attempted, if either God had not restrained him, or himself had not known it impreſtable. And it is most remarkable, that the first promoters of that divine Doctrine were persons, who, both by precept and practice, decryed Ambition

Ambition and declined State imployments; and so it were absurd to think that they invented these in subordination to State Projects.

There is also much force in that Argument, wherein from the nature of prophesying, is concluded the *being* of a God: for, to foresee, is doubtless a way of seeing, far above the reach of humane nature; man not being able to conclude but that, What is possible upon both parts, may come to pass upon either of its parts. And hence it was, that the Heathens themselves termed this prediction *divination*, as if it could not be but divine. As also, if there were not a God, but that this were a fiction, it would follow, that errour and delusion (such as this *ex hypothesi*) were able, and actually did, of all other things, frame a man's soul most to virtue: and that the best of men (such as the adorers of a Deity) were both the greatest cheats and block-heads. All which, are absurdities to be hiss'd at by all who are masters of the meanest portion of humane reason.

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There lurketh much curious contemplation in pondering, how that albeit the parents of all heathenish Religions, have been incomparably the chiefest witts in their times; for else they could not have impress'd the spirits of their disciples with such abstract principles: Yet all their Models, seem repugnant to common reason: and they have choos'd to teach principles which seem ridiculous.

Thus the Fictions related by the Poets of their Gods, the Rites used by the *Romans*, and the Fopperies of the *Alcoran*, are absurdities unworthy of a rational belief, if man were not acted by an innate principle, to place the mysteries of Religion above his reason.

By which we see, that the imputation cast upon the Scriptures of their contrariety to reason, chocks likewayes the principles of all Nations: and certainly, if there were nothing revealed to us in Religion, but what the short line of our reason might fadom, the omnipotency of God, and the weakness of our own reason, should remain still unknown; and seeing our reason is only suitable to our nature, certainly if that infinite essence

and

and it's mysteries might be comprehended by that same reason, which measureth things finite, we might conclude God to be finite likewayes; and is it not impudence in us who know not the ebbing and flowing of the sea, nor the reason why the Adamant draweth the iron, to repine because we cannot comprehend the essence of God Almighty? and then vainly to conclude, that because we cannot grasp within the short armes of our understanding, the vast bulk of the Deity, that there is no Deity? A conclusion as absurd, as if one should say, that when the nimble wings of an arrow transport it above our sight, it did leave off to be, when it left off to be perceived. And I am of opinion, that mysteriousness suits rarely well with divine Truths, the finest things using alwayes to be best wrapt up: thus if we listen to our hid inclinations, we will find a pleasing veneration in reserved silence; and our curiosity will swiftly follow, what by it's retiredness fleeth from us: silent groves whose bush-top trees lay their heads together, as in a conspiracy to resist the Sun's entry, and powder its light with Sables, creats

create a veneration in us. And as the Heathens did chooſe groves, So did the primitive Chriſtians light their Devotions with torches and candles, intimating thereby that umbrag'd ſilence was an excellent Shrine for ſincere devotions; and in this ſenſe, it may be, the Word of God is ſaid to be a Lantern to our ſteps, and the ſeven Churches are compared to ſeven Candleſticks. Did not our Saviour teach His diſciples in parables? and was not the Ark vailed from the eyes of the people? the Pagans diſpenſed their divinity in Hieroglyphicks; and amongſt humane Writers, the moſt myſterious carry ſtill the Lawrels: And why ſhould we vainly wiſh to comprehend the nature of the Deity, ſeeing *Moſe*'s, Gods intimate, and minion, could not have that allowance? And God himſelf, when for our neceſſary inſtruction He would diſcover ſomething of Himſelf to us, is forced *per ἀνθρωποπάθειαν*, (as Divines ſpeak) to diſcover Himſelf in a ſtile borrowed from humane frailty, and to expreſs His infinite affections by our diſordered paſſions.

I be-

I believe, that *Socrates*, nature's greatest disciple, and the Deity's *protomartyr*, was a proselyte of the same faith, which we profess, and had his large soul illuminated by that Sun of righteousness, whose refulgent rayes are now the bright torches of the Christian Church. Neither is my belief in this staggered by the silence of his co-temporary Writers, as to this partitular: seeing these, not being of the same perswasion with him, but being convinced of his moral worth, did describe his opinions suitably to their own apprehension. Thus did these pagan Historians admire the great Saviour of mankind, only for His moral accomplishments, without reaching these divine principles, by which He was acted. The *Stoicks* likewaies were in all probality, a tribe of *John* Baptist's, and God having resolved to purge the Universe of its original unrighteousness by that blessed *Manna* which came down from heaven to give life to the world, did by their doctrine of abstemiousness, as by a spare diet, prepare its body for receiving that divine Dose. And certainly, if men had disbanded that execrable troop of lusts,

lusts, against which these preached, and had listned (as the *Stoicks* Book of Discipline injoyned) to their own private consciences, and had by retiredness abstracted themselves from the reach of temptations, it had facilitated much their conversion: for if the young Lawyer, who came to consult Christ how to draw up his Securitie of Heaven, and of his portion there, had believed their Oracle, which decry'd riches as the unnecessary baggage of man's life, and the mudd which clog'd the wings of the souls contemplation, and kept it from soaring its natural pitch, he had never refused our Saviour's yoke, because he was commanded to sell all and to give it to the poor. Thus likewayes if the rich glutton had dyeted himself according to the scant prescript of their allowance, his schorched tongue had not stood in need of a drop of water to allay it's thirst. Neither had *Nicodemus* needed to have mantled himself in the darkness of the night, when he came to our Saviour, out of fear lest he should have been discovered; seeing their doctrine might have taught him, that *fear* was a passion unworthy to be

lodged in the soul of man: And that there is nothing here, which a man either should, or needeth to fear.

But albeit neither *instinct* nor *faith*, were able to convince us infallibly of this truth; Yet is it both more satisfying, and more safe to embrace this opinion, then its contrary. More satisfying, because mans *summum bonum* here, being lodged in the tranquillity of his spirit; That which can best plain and smooth the rugged and uneven face of his frequent and inevitable misfortunes, must be doubtless the most caressable of opinions: wherefore, seeing nothing can strengthen so much mans frailty, nothing check so soon his dispair, nothing feed so much his hope, nor amitate so much his courage, as to believe that there is a God, who beareth the heavyest end of all our crosses upon the shoulders of His *love*; who is able to turn, or arrest the giddy wheel of fortune by the strong hand of His Omnipotency; and who twisteth Lawrels of inimaginable joyes for the heads of these who fight under his banners. If a man leaned not his weary soul upon this divine Rest, he were not only an enemy to nature,

nature, but even to his own happineſs. What rocks of danger could men eſcape, if blind fortune did ſit at the helme, and if vertuous perſons complain, as affairs are preſently ſtated, that their merites are not weighed with indifferency enough in the Scales of juſtice? What might be expected, if hazzard got the ballance to mannage? and theſe who leave their native countries, when they perceive that the Law beginneth to render its Oracles in an unconſtant Stile, and with a trembling voice, behooved to leave the world, if this Anarchy were by Atheiſme eſtabliſhed? For as a wiſe *Stoick* well obſerved, ουκ εστι ζην εν τω κοσμω κενω θεων, καὶ κενω προνοιας. *It were impoſſible to live in a world void of God, and void of providence.*

It is likewayes moſt ſafe; for if there be a Deity, doubtleſs theſe obdured Atheiſts, whoſe obſtinacy hath conjured their conſciences to a conſtrain'd ſilence, and brybed theſe infallible Witneſſes, to depone what ſuited beſt with their wild reſolutions, or rather neglected reſolutely their ſincere depoſitions: then certainly, the juſt flames of that Gods indigna-

tion, whom they have disclaimed, will bear for them a furnace in hell, beyond what the other damned spirits shall meet with in their torture: Whereas albeit there be no tribunal, from which such a thunder-bolt sentence may be darted, nor no supreme Judge by whom our actions shall be canvas'd; Then these who have paid their adorations at his altars, shall be in no danger. Wherefore, seeing it should be the task of a *Virtuoso*, to turn out all such thoughts as may raise a mutiny in his breast; it were a foolish toy in him to entertain Atheisme, which is a Nurcery of disquietness: for whose breast could enjoy a calme whilst a concernment of so much weight as his eternal portion, did hing from the weak thred of a mere *may be*, and of such a *may be* as marches so near with a *will not be*?

But if ye would know, what disquieting vapors Atheisme sends up to the brain, when it is once drunk in: go to the horrour creating beds of a dying Atheist, whose roaring voice might awake the most lethargick conscience that ever the devil lull'd asleep: There ye shall know

know by the Urinal of his eyes, and the water ſtanding therein, what convulſions his ſoul ſuffers; and ſhall learn from his own mouth, how grievouſly his diſeaſed ſoul is ſtretched upon the rack of deſpair: then it is that the voluminous Regiſters of his conſcience, which did lie formerly claſp'd in ſome unſearcht corner of his memory, are laid open before him, and the devil who hitherto gave him the leſſening end of the Proſpect, to ſurvey his ſins in, turns now its magnifying end to this fearfull eye. It ſhould be then the grand deſign of a Philoſopher, to order his own breaſt aright, before he go abroad to view the Works of the Creation; leſt if he leave its door unbolted, the devil ſteal from him his richeſt Jewel, whileſt he ſweats to enrich his contemplation with what is of far leſs conſequence.

Chap. II.

Of Superstition.

IT is not wild fancy to think, that *Atheisme* hath been the product of *Superstition*: for certainly, many who were by humor *Gallios*, finding that Religion exacted from men such inhumane homage to its recognizance, as was the sacrificing children among the Heathens, wearying Pilgrimages and hectick Lents amongst Christians, did resolve rather to deny than to adore such Deities. Thus *Lucretius* revolted upon *Agamemnons* sacrificing his daughter *Iphigenia* for the Grecian safety, crying out,

Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum.

And thus *Petronius Arbiter* a monk of the same Cell, says that,

Primus in orbe deos fecit timor.
Fulmina cœlo
Cum caderent

And to prevent this, our Saviour doth of inculcate, that his yoak is easie and His burden is light. And doubtless, as the straightest

ſtraighteſt line is alwayes the ſhorteſt; So the moſt rational deſignes are alwayes eaſilyeſt effectuated; and as *Seneca* hath excellently obſerved, *Licit Deus non eſſet, tamen non peccaretur ob peccati vilitatem.* There is ſomething of meanneſs in the gallanteſt, and moſt alluring ſin. And this is moſt energetically expreſt in Scripture, whilſt it is ſaid *that the wicked weary themſelves by their ſins.* A principle, which not only the magiſterial Authority of Gods Spirit, but our experience likewayes places above the reach of all ſcruples: for are not the inquietudes, the cheats, and palliated parricides, and ſacriledges brooded by ambition, the churliſhneſs and cloſe-handedneſs parented by avarice, effects unworthy to be father'd upon any rational ſoul; and at which we ſhould ſcarlet our cheeks with bluſhes, as well as enpale them through fear, and ſhould ſtand as much in awe of our conſciences, as moſt do of a Diety? Yet, it may be we are in a miſtake, whilſt we place Superſtition in the exceſs of ſuch adorations, as are either commanded or indifferent: for ſeeing the object of our adoration,

God Almighty, is in Himself infinit, we can never exceed either in our respects to Him, or in the expressions of them. Excess being only admissible, where the object is finit, and where we attribute more then is due, which can never be here. Thus if Kneeling be lawfull at any occasion, I hardly see why it is not lawful to kneel at all occasions. And if these exteriour rites and ceremonies (some whereof are allow'd in all Churches) be judged requisite, for expressing our vassalage and subordination to God our maker, either they are altogether unwarrantable or else we should proportion them (as far as in us lyes) to that infinite object. And seeing the Angels are said to cover their faces with their wings before Him, the Patriarches to fall upon their face and worship; and our adorable Saviour in that conflict wherein He represented sinfull man, is by *Matthew* remarked to have fallen upon His face, by *Mark* to have fallen upon the ground, and by *Luke* to have kneeled: What is crawling man, that he should account such gestures fond Superstition? It would appear then, that superstition consists in mans worshipping

ſhipping God by means unlawfull, ſuch as are children-ſacrifices, and ſuch like, whereby His divine attributes are miſ-repreſented, and tainted with cruelty, or tyranny and not in an exceſs, in ſuch expreſſions of our reſpect as are in themſelves lawfull. And if there be any ſtrength in that argument, wherein we inforce the being of God, from the harmonious conſent and aſſent of all Nations: certainly, by that ſame argument, we may eſtabliſh the decency, if not the neceſſity, of Ceremonies. For, what Nation bowes to Altars, without profound and external ſubmiſſions? And, who lodges upon the ſurface of our Globe, who payes not as the *reddendo* of their Charter to theſe gods whom they worſhip, ceremonial Adorations, wrapt up in moſt ſubmiſſive Rites?

CHAP.

Chap. III.

Of the Worlds Creation.

THat God made all things for His glory, is an expression, which (I think) looks not well at the test of reason, and seems to have no warrant but unwary custome: for beyond all question, His glory was so brim-ful formerly, that it neither needed, nor could receive any considerable accession from this small drop. And besides this, the innate apprehension we have of doing any thing for one's glory, dyes this expression with some guilt; Yet, I confess, we may warrantably say, that when perverse man calls His power in question, or controverts His being *only wise*; that then, God for our instruction, and the vindication of His own glorious Attributes, doth many things for His own glory. And in this sense, the Scripture saith, that God will punish the wicked, and deliver His people, for His own glory. And wherever it is said,

ſaid, that God doth, or createth any thing for His own glory, it is doubtleſs in this ſenſe; in which man (who is made after His image) may act for his own glory without any vanity; albeit to act for his own glory in the firſt ſenſe were in him criminal. It is then more probable, that God being infinitely good, and all good being *ſui communicativum*, that His deſign in creating the world, was to communicate and diſplay His goodneſs: and upon this baſe probably hath *Ariſtotle* reared up his error, of *the worlds exiſtency from all eternity*: for, ſeeing God was *ab æterno* infinitely good, and that *good* is ſtill communicative: he did (it may be) conclude, that *ab æterno*, God did communicate His goodneſs: which could only be to creatures. And therefore it was neceſſary that there ſhould have been a world: and ſome Philoſophers have aver'd, that the world flowed from God *per emanationem*, *ab æterno*, as beams are lanced out from the body of the Sun. Albeit I be none of *Ariſtotle's* Partiſans, nor hold my Philoſophy of him as my Superiour; Yet I cannot but think, that God hath

hath communicated His goodneſs to worlds prior to ours, which ſeems but a conceit of 5662 years ſtanding. But I am not ſo arrogant as to determine the time of the firſt worlds birth, nor how many Caders it hath had, reſolving to leave its Date, blank, to be fill'd up by ſome arrogant Pretender. Neither ſhould I accuſe mine own thoughts of Hereſie, for concluding, that probably there are preſently thouſands of worlds co-exiſting with ours, whereof ſome, it may be, are governed by Maximes, if not contrary, yet at leaſt different from theſe which are our Canons. All which worlds, albeit they were actually ſubſiſting, would lie in the boſome of the large imaginarie Spaces, but like ſo many ſmall balls in the corner of a large Tennis-court. I ſhall not for confirming this opinion, cite, with an ignorant French Curate, the parable of the Lepers, where it is ſaid, *Nonne ſunt decem mundi?* becauſe I know that it was wittily anſwered, *Sed ubi ſunt reliqui novem?*

CHAP.

Chap. IV.

Of Eternity.

THat Eternity is all present, and that in it, there is neither preterit, nor future, is but a conceit, and a needless mysterie imposed upon our belief, which is really more mysterious then the Trinity; who knows but it is founded upon an expression in *Cicero*, wherein Eternity is call'd *æternum instans?* For how then can it be said, that God was before the world? for *was* is preterit, and before the world there was, as themselves alledg, no time; and so there was a *was* in eternity. Is not God call'd by Himself Alpha and Omega, first and last, the one whereof is preterite and and the other future? And it is said, *Rev. 16. 5. O glorious God, who art, and wast, and shalt be.* And if it be answered, That this is only fitted to our capacities; certainly, that is all is craved: for doubtlesse there is no such reall thing, as these three measures of time, even in things finit and created;

ted; for they owe their being only to our conceit, as well in the one as in the other. And when God describ'd Himself by His name. JAH *I am*, it was not mean't, that no measure of time could be attributed to Him, but the present; but rather, that what He was, was to man incomprehensible. And that all we could know of Him, was that He existed; and by that expression, that all things to Him are present, was meant, that by His Knowledge *intuitive*, (as Divines term it) He comprehends all things which were to be, as if they were really present; and this is spoke, not of his being, but of his knowledge. Neither can it be concluded that if *was* or *shall be*, may be attributed to God, then He must be mutable, and that *was*, denotes mutation; for as I said formerly, these are but termes, not really existing, and so cannot import any real mutation.

CHAP.

Chap. V.

Of Providence.

HOw God imployes His uncontrolable Scepter, after what fashion He governs this lower world, and in what characters He writes His eternal Decrees hath been the arrogant study of some mad-cap Pedants, who talk as magisterially of His Decrees, as if they were of His cabinet Councel. And albeit to deterre such bold intruders, He destroyed thousands of His ancient people, because they looked into His Ark; Yet, such is the petulancy of some later Witts, that they must needs look into His unsearchable bosome, and there marshall all His Decrees, and conceit they understand His way of working; and thus in disputing of objects, infinitely removed by their abstruseness from their sense, they shew themselves more ridiculous, then these who would dispute concerning the qualities of an object, before it come so near as that they may know of what species,

ſpecies it is: for ſeeing it is a maxime, that there is nothing in our underſtanding, which hath not paſt to it thorow our ſenſes, and that the things of God are immaterial, and ſo fall not under the cognizance of our ſenſes; It muſt be folly to think, that any humane ſcrutinie can find out myſteries that are ſo unſearchable, except they be imparted to them by immediate revelation; a kind of correſpondence which I conceive few now a dayes hold with heaven. Yet, I confeſſe, it is as hard to confute their fictions, as it is impoſſible for them to come by the knowledge of them. But as this ſtudy is unattainable, ſo it is unprofitable; for ſeeing God's art of governing the world, and His Decrees of ſaving or damning its Citizens, is a trade we ſhall never be able to practiſe: why ſhould we have ſuch an itch to underſtand it? It ſhould be enough to us, to be ſaved, albeit we know not how, or by what manner of Decrees; except we be of the ſame mettall with that fooliſh patient, who would not be cured, becauſe the Phyſitian would not ſhew him how the cure was to be compoſed, and what were its ingredients.

And

And is it not the Zenith and top branch of madneſs for us to pry into Gods unſearchable Decrees, who know not how our neighbours calf is formed in its Dams belly?

It was a narrow Omnipotency, which ſome mean-ſpirited Heathens allowed their *Jupiter*, when they conceited than he wanted leaſure to diſpoſe of trifles.

Non licet exiguis rebus adeſſe Jovi.

For if the twinkling of an eye, were not time ſufficient for God to diſpoſe upon all the affairs of this world, then there might be a greater power then His; and the power to diſpoſe ſo ſuddainly, were wanting to his omnipotency, and ſo He were not infinit, and conſequently no God.

Neither was the Rodomonade of *Alphonſus*, King of *Portugal*, more pious then this. When he alleaged that if God had made uſe of His advice in framing the world, He had helped many things in it, which he now could juſtly taxe of errour.

These two extremes, are the two Poles, whereon the globe of Atheisme turns it self; some, out of an impious humility, complementing God out of His Authority, by denying that He disposes of the meaner size of business; and others detracting from his providence, in attributing his operations to chance and fate, or branding them with injustice or imprudence.

There are among School-men two opinions which dispute victory with (almost) equal forces. The one whereof, will have God the sole agent, and to make use of secundary causes, only, as of ciphers; these say that it is not fire which burns, but that God burns *ad præsentiam ignis*; nor water which cools, but that God cools *ad præsentiam aquæ*: which is in my opinion, the same thing as to say, that God jugled with man; and as Charmers do, presented ingredients, but wrough by hid means.

In too near an affinity with this, is the Doctrine of Predestination as some teach it, wherein they will have man to play the mere spectator in his own Salvation: and

and albeit there be a free and full tender of mercy made to lost man, yet will not allow him any power to embrace or reject it; judging this one of the necessary appanages of Gods Omnipotency, that he doth save or condemn *ex mero beneplacito*, never considering, that the question is not, what God can do, but what he doth: And that it derogates nothing from his Omnipotency, that he will not damn poor sinners who according to their Doctrine cannot be blamed for their obstinacy; because it was never free to them to do otherwise: and how (I pray you) could the sluggard in the parable, have been punished, for not improving his talent, and laying it up in a napkin, if God have by His Decree cast an insolvable knot upon that napkin, wherein it was laid up?

The other opinion, will have secundary causes the sole agents; and teaches, that God in the first moulding of each creature, did dote it with innate qualities, sufficient to act every thing requisite for its subsistence; but in light of its subjection to its Maker, reserved to himself, as His prerogative royal, a

power to bend and bow these inclinations upon extraordinary occasions, for the good of the Universe, or when his infallible Omni-prudence should think expedient. Thus, when that Al-seing eye of the world, the Sun, was first turned off the frame, it had in Commission to sow its influences over the world without any retardment; Yet was its motion arrested, and turned back by an extraordinary warrant in the dayes of *Joshua* and *Zedekiah*. Thus they make the creatures resemble a Watch, which after it is once compleated, goes by its own Springs and Wheels, without the Artists extraordinary assistance. Yet when either its motion becomes irregular, or when the owner finds it fit, it is unpieced, or hath its Index put forward or backward at his pleasure. And this last, seems to suit best with the principles, both of Christianity and Stoicisme. With Christianity, because it gives a check to presumption, and suffers not man to think himself the sole arbiter of his own condition; because God can easily quash these Ba-

bylon-like fancies, which his topleſs ambition is ſtill a building; and to his deſpair, becauſe a liſt from the ſtrong arm of Providence, may heave him up above all his difficulties.

This correſponds beſt likewayes with Stoiciſme, becauſe it pulls the hands of a ſluggard from his boſome, and ſets them a work to prepare for himſelf, and not to repoſe his unreaſonable hopes upon divine Providence; which only keeps theſe from ſinking, who endeavour to ſwimme. This likewayes takes from man, all excuſe of ſinning, not ſuffering him to lay over his vitiouſneſs upon providence, a ſhift too ordinary amongſt ſuch as miſunderſtand the raſhleſs Doctrine of the reformed Churches.

This opinion makes us likewayes underſtand, what the Heathens meant by *fortune*, which they termed *giddy*; what the Stoicks meant by *fate*, which they confeſſed to be *irreſiſtible*; and in what ſence Philoſophers concluded that each man could hammer out his own fortune. As to the Pagans *fortune*, it cannot be thought, that ſeing it was by themſelves confeſſ'd to be *blind*, that they could

truſt it with the reines of the admirably managed world. And ſeeing they confeſſed, that it was alwayes ſtaggering and unconſtant, it cannot be thought that they could aſcribe to it, all theſe curious and juſt events, which they themſelves admired hourly. Wherefore it is probable, that the Philoſophers, having through the proſpect of nature, and by an uninterrupted experience, obſerved, that man (who acted from a freedom of ſpirit unreſtrained, either by providence or ſtarr-influences as to his ordinary operations) was of a volatile and capricious humor; therefore they concluded, that the ſtate of humane affairs, which was framed and unframed at his ill-fixt pleaſure, behoved neceſſarily to be moſt ſubject to changes. And that ſeeing the victories of *Ceſar*, depended upon the inclinations of his ſouldiers, who by abandoning him, would fetch his proſperity away with them, they had reaſon therefore to terme his fortune Frail and expoſed to hazard.

Thus the advancment of the reſtleſs Courtier is uncertain, becauſe it hings from

from the humor of his Prince, whose spirit hath some allay of unconstancy, as well as hath that of the fearful subject, who trembles under his Scepter. And thus the oyl consuming student, can promise himself no applause, because the paralytick hand of the multitudes fancies, holds the scales wherein his abilities are weighed.

In fine, *fortune* was nothing to these Ancients, but the unbodyed freedom of mans will, considered abstractly from all particular persons and the innate qualities of all other creatures (which, because they are mortal, must therefore be changable) then which nothing is more inconstant, nothing more blind.

The other branch of divine Providence, which consists in the supreme Authority, whereby God makes all humane inclinations run sometimes against the byasse of their specifick nature, was by them termed *fate*. And this in their Mythology they fabled to be an Adamant chain, which they fastned to the foot of *Jupiters* Chair, meaning by its adamantine nature, that it

was hard to be broke like the Adamant; and by faſtning it to *Jupiters* Chair, that it was the product of the Almighty's power. Thus *Fortune* and *Fate*, were to them but the right and left hand of Chriſtian providence.

Theſe embodyed Angels, the *Stoicks*, finding that fortunes megrim could not be cured, nor fates decrees reſcinded, and yet reſolving, in ſpight of all external accidents, to ſecure to themſelves a calmneſs of ſpirit; did place their happineſs in the contempt of all theſe follies, whoſe bloſſomes fortune could not blaſt, and ſought for happineſs in an acquieſcence to all which providence did unalterably decree; So that neither fortune nor fate could ſtand in the way of their happineſs, becauſe they ſlighted the one, and ſubmitted to the other.

And in this ſenſe, each man in their ſchools, was admitted to be Maſter-of-work to his own fortune: and that without diſparaging the omnipotent power of the great Fortune-maker, in ſubmiſſion to whom their happineſs was placed.

Albeit

Albeit the knowledge and acknowledgment of a God, be the *basis* of true Stoicisme, and a firmer one then any the Heathens could pretend to; Yet that knowledge of Him, which by the curiosity of School-men and the bigotry of Tub-preachers, as now formed in a Body of Divinity, is of all others the least necessary and the most dangerous. And whereas we did see God but in a Glass formerly, that Glass is now so misted and soyld by each Pedants flegmatick breath, that it is hard to see him at all, but impossible to see Him there. And to extend a little that mysterious analogy; we are said to behold God here, as in a Glass; and as objects are best perceived in the smoothest mirrors; so the plainest descriptions of Him, are still the truest: for when He is seen by Atheists in the globe-glass of their infidelity, He appears less then really He is; when beheld by the Pagans in the multiplying Glass of Paganisme, He appears many; and when He is lookt upon in the magnifying Glass of Superstition, though He appear but one, Yet He is misrepresented, because He is represented

as

as more terrible then he desires to appear; and ordinarily the better cut Glasses are, ind the more artificial, the worse the face as by them represented.

Chap. VI.

Of Theory.

That first course which did sow all the world with briers and thorns, did, of allother things, fall most heavily upon the soul of man. Which because it was chief in the transgression, ought in reason to have been most tortured in the punishment. And now his disquieted spirit, is daily pierc'd with the prickles of thornie disputes and debates; which, as like briers, they produce no fruit fit for alimenting that noble half of man, which is his rational soul; So do they, like thorns, pierce his tender conscience, and to screw his torments to their highest pin; the thoughts of God, and of settlement in Him, which like balme should cure these sores, is become that hemlock,

hemlock, which occasions his distractions, and poysons his meditations. For, albeit the Heroes of the Primitive Church, did give milk in abundance to Infant-christians; Yet, many of their successors, have mixt it so with the tart vinegar of contention, that the milk begins now to crudle, and so is become loathsome to the appetite of tender believers. For, most of Churchmen, being idle, and conceiving, that if they taught only the holy Scriptures, their vocation might by Laicks be undervalued as easie, and that they would be denyed that applause, which was due to quaintnesse of wit, especially in a setled Church, wherein Church-men could not draw reverence from the people, by Oracles, as did the Heathen Priests; nor by prophecies and miracles, as did the Servants of the most High, under the old and new Testaments; did therefore, according to their private inclinations, frame each to himself a new kind of Divinity. The more pragmatick sort, and these whose humour was edged with choler, invented polemick or controvetted divinity: And so by an intestine and civil war of opinions,

opinions, raised within the bowels of Religion, did waste and pillage that holy Canaan, which formerly flowed with the milk of sincere Doctrine, and the honey of divine Consolations. And then that precious blood, which formerly purpled only pagan-scaffolds, dyed now the swords of fellow-believers: who, to propagate their private judgment, buried Churches under their rubbish, fed the birds of heaven with the carcases of pious and reverend Church-men: and by the mad hands of bigot opiniastry, broke to pieces all the sacred bonds of natural and civil duties; and thus they raised the devil of contention, whom they could not lay again, and made this Itch of disputing, turn the Scab of the Church.

Others again, in whose brains sullen melancholy form'd phantomes and ideas, invented scholastick Theology; and these in abstract cells, erected a Mint-house, for coyning the dross of their own contemplations, into wonderful bombast notions; and to make them go current, in the suffering Church, gave them the *impressa* of Theology.

A third ſort, not able to ſoare their pitch in the ſky of Invention, reſolved to ſet up a correſpondence with heaven: and this they called enthuſiaſtick, or inſpired Theology. And their Cabbins were Poſt-houſes, where one might know what was reſolved lately in the conclave of heaven, whether the King or Parliament was to wear the Lawrels, and what ſhould be the iſſue of our pious rebellions. Theſe could likewiſe caſt the horoſcope of our ſalvation; and invented a ſpecies of Phyſiognomy, whereby they could tell if the marks of Grace dwelt upon a face, and if one had the traicts of an elect Childe of God. After this faſhion did they propheſie their own fancies, and call that *Providence* only which made for them.

There wants not ſome likewayes, who, out of a well-meaning deſire, to make the lamp of truth dart its rayes with the clearer ſplendor, ſnuff it ſo nearly, that they extinguiſh it quite: and leave us nothing but the ſtink of its ſnuff; like ſome curious Phyſicians, who purge ſo frequently, that they deſtroy the body entruſted to their cure. We in this I-

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ſtand have met with ſome of theſe *Charletans*, who, I am confident; purged oftner both Church and State, then *Luke*, the beloved Phyſician, would have preſcribed, if we had had the good fortune to have been his patients.

The talleſt wit is not able to reach heaven, albeit (I know) mady disjoint their wits in ſtretching them too high in the inquiry of its myſteries. Neither impute I our ſhort-coming in the knowledge of theſe myſteries, ſolly to their obſtruſeneſſe; but, I believe our meditations are more clouded in relation to theſe, then really they need to be, becauſe of their innate frailty: for we ſee, that ſome who are maſters of much reaſon in things humane, betray much folly in their devotions; wherfore, I am induced to believe, that it fares with the ſoul in this, as uſually it doth with the body, whoſe pulls are proportionally the weaker, as the thing graſp'd after is plac'd above its true reach. And ſo theſe arrogant Pretenders pull but faintly, becauſe they raiſe their meditations too high on their tip-toes: where by they are diſabled from imploying all their

their natural vigour, in pulling at these weighty and sublime Truths, which they catch, not by that corner which is nearest, as meaner wits do, (and so are more successful) but endeavour a fetch at what in Divinity is highest; by which effort, their endeavours are fainter, then these whose spirit is of a lesser size. And these Colossus wits, become the greatest Hereticks, as those ordinarily are most burnt, whose fingers oftest stir up fires, and as Chirurgians have more cuts and wounds, then any other Mechanicks, who handle not so oft these wounding tools. It is not fit that mortal man should wrestle too much with these mysteries, least his reason, like *Jacob*, be forc'd to come off, halting.

Nothing hath more busied my thoughts then to find a reason why the Heathens, who were as assiduous and zealous too in the worship of their Gods, as we Christians, did never frequent Sermons, nor knew no such part of divine Service; whereof (probably) the reason was because their Governors (whose commands amongst them were the sole *jure-divinoship* of all Ecclesiastick Rites) feared

feared, that Church-men, if they had been licenc'd to harangue to the people, would have influenc'd too much that gross body: which was the reason likewayes, why in the primitive Church (as one of their Historians observes) *ex formula populo prædicabant, tantum antiquitas timebat δημαγωγους.* They preached only approved Sermons, so much did antiquity fear these leaders of the people; a practice, as is reported, lately renewed by the Duke of *Russia:* and this seemeth also to have been the reason, why all Liturgies have prick't texts for their Preachers, lest if they had been left a freedom in their choice, they had chose such as might, in the letter, have suited best with such seditious Libels as are now obtruded upon the people, in lieu of pious homilies, at remarkable or festival occasions. Yet, I think, that our late Doctors, who can find all Doctrine in any text, would easily have eluded that canonick designe. If we should parallel the homilies, which these renowned Fathers have left as Legacies to posterity, with these which our age runs after, we would find, that the

the first were pointed lessons of mortification; which, like *Moses* rod, could draw gushes of tears from the rocky hearts of the most obdured sinners: whereas many of these last are but State-gazets wherein the people are informed, what are the resolves of the civil Magistrate: And whereas their first institution made them Ambassadors of glad-tydings betwixt God and His people, they have made themselves Heraulds to denounce warres betwixt God's Vice-gerent and His subjects. Thus, *Peter's* successors will oft times, like himself, rather draw the sword then watch for their Master. And since our Savviour hath disarmed them, as He did *Peter*, and filled their hands with the keyes, these who offend them, are sure to get over the head with these. I confesse, God hath not left His Church without some skilful Pilots, to lead in His servants, with security, to the harbour of Salvation: to whom this Discourse and its Author shall pay all respects.

Chap. VII.

Of the ſtrictneſs of Churches.

MOſt of all Churches, do like coy maids, lace their bodies ſo ſtrait, that they bring on them a conſumption; and will have the gates of heaven to have been only made for themſelves: and as this nigardlineſſe hath poſſeſt Churches, from that root hath ſtem'd the churliſhneſſe of ſome private Chriſtians, who will allow God but a moſt inconſiderable number of theſe whom He hath admitted to make up His viſible Church. Thus, ſome Paſtors will only admit two or three to be gueſts at the Lord's Table, allowing no wedding garment, but what is of their own ſpinning, and others, with their uncharitable hands, blur the names of all their acquaintances out of the Book of Life, as if they were keepers of His Regiſters and Rolls; and will only have ſeats kept in the Church triumphant, for three or four Siſters, who are ſo frugal of their devotions, as to ſpare

spare them at home, to the end they may be liberal in publick. But both these should consider, that the new *Jerusalem* is said to have more gates then one; that *John* in his *Revelation* tells us, that numberlesse numbers were seen following the Lamb; and that it is not probable, that the wise Framer of the world made such a spacious dwelling as heaven, to be inhabited by so inconsiderable a number: whereas hell (hell in the geography of believed tradition) is only the small kernel of this small shell *the earth*. I know, that many are called and few chosen; and that the way is strait, and few enter in at it: But we should consider, that these chosen, are said to be few, in respect only of these many who are called: which is most certain; for ten parts of eleven are Pagans or Mahumetans, (and all are called) of that eleventh part, many are malicious Hereticks; and amongst the residue many are flagitious and publick sinners; So that albeit the greatest part of the regular members of the visible Church were sav'd, yet the number would be small in comparison of these others: The body of the visible Church, must

(like all other bodies) be compounded of contrary elements. And albeit I am not of opinion, that this body ſhould be ſuffer'd to ſwell with humours, yet I would not wiſh, that it ſhould be macerated with purgations. It's nails (though but excrementitious parts) ſhould not be ſo nearly pared, as that the body may bleed; yet, they ſhould be ſo pared, as that Chriſtians may not ſcratch one another. They ſhould feed, not upon blood, but milk: and they are unmannerly gueſts, who will not ſuffer others to ſit at their Maſters table with them.

It pleaſes my humour to contemplate, how, that albeit all Religions war againſt one another; yet, are all of them governed by the ſame principles, and even by theſe principles, in effect, which they ſeem to abominate. Thus, albeit the ceſſation of miracles be cryed down by many, yet, do the moſt bigot relate, what miracles have been wrought by the founders of their Hierarchies, and what propheſies they have oracelouſly pronounced. And ſeeing all confeſs, that God, in our dayes, breaks the proſperous upon the ſame Wheel, on whoſe

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top they did but lately triumph; making *fortune* adopt the oppreſt in their vice; why ſhould we talk ſo much of the ceaſing of miracles? For, doubtleſs, theſe effects are in policy, as contrary to nature, as are the ſwimming of iron, or ſweetning of rivers; or rather more: Seeing in the firſt, mans will is forc'd (without which, ſuch revolutions could not be effectuated) whereas in the laſt, dull and ſenſual qualities are only wreſted; which as they are not ſo excellent, ſo, doubtleſs, are not able to make ſuch reſiſtance as the Soul of man: Yea, I ſhould rather think, that the world being become old, muſt, doubtleſſe, be more dim-ſighted (as all old things are) then formerly; and therefore, God doth now preſent greater objects of admiration to our eyes then He did formerly: For, man is become ſo atheiſtical, that if God did not preſs His meditations with ſuch infallible teſtimonies of the being of an irreſiſtable power, he would doubtleſs, ſhake off all reſolutions of ſubmitting. Thus, we ſee that in all the tract of *John*'s Revelations, miracles grow ſtill more frequent, the nearer the world

draweth to its grave; and, like all other bodies, the weaker it becomes, the more subject it is to all alterations, and the less is nature able to resist. And it would appear, that if miracles were requisite at first, for the establishment of Religion, even when no older Religion was to cede it, and to make an *exit* at its entry; much more, should miracles be necessary, for fixing any Religion against the received constitutions of a previously settled Church. But to prosecute my first design, it is remarkable, that albeit infallibility be not by all, conceded to any militant Church; yet, it is assumed by all. Neither is there any Church under the Sun, which would not fix the name of heretick, and account him (almost) reprobate, who would refuse to acknowledge the least rational of their Principles: and thus these Church-men pull up the ladders from the reach of others, after they have by them scal'd the walls of preferment themselves. That Church-men should immerse themselves in things civill, is thought excentrick to their sphere, even *in ordine ad spiritualia*: And yet, even the

the *Capuchins*, who are the greatest pretenders to abstract Christianity and Mortification, do, of all others, dipth most in things civill. The *Phanaticks* enveigh against Presbyterian Gowns. The *Presbyterian* tears the Episcopal lawn Sleeves, and thinks them the whore of *Babel's* shirt. The *Episcopist* flouts at the popish Robes, as the livery of the beast. The *Antinomian* emancipats his disciples from all obedience to the Law. The *Protestant* enjoyns good works, and such are commanded, but place no merit in them. The *Roman-Catholick* thinks he merits in his obedience. The *Phanatick* believes the Lords Supper but a ceremony, though taken with very little outward respect. The *Presbyterian* allowes it, but will not kneel. The *Episcopist* kneels, but will not adore it. The *Catholick* mixeth adoration with his kneeling. And thus, most of all Religions are made up of the same elements, albeit their symbolick qualities predomine in some more then in others. And if that maxime hold, that *majus & minus non variant speciem*, we may pronounce all of them to be one Religion.

The Church, like the river *Nilus*, can hardly condescend where it's head lies; and as all condescend that the Church is a multitude of Christians, so joyn all their opinions, and you shall find that they will have it to have, like the multitude, many heads. But in this (as in all Articles, not absolutely necessary for being saved) I make the Laws of my countrey to be my Creed: and that a clear decision herein is not absolutely necessary for Salvation, is clear from this, that many poor Clowns shall be saved, whose conscience is not able to teach their judgments how to decide this controversie, wherein so many heads have been confounded. so many have been lost, and so many have been shrewdly knockt against one another; from which flinty collisions, much fire, but little light, hath ever burst forth.

God, by His Omniscience, foreseeing, that it was too dazeling a sight for the pur-blind eyes of man's soul, to behold Him invironed with the rayes of divine Majesty, did bestow upon us, three mirrours, wherein we might contemplate Him (as we use to look upon the Sun

Sun in a tub of water, not daring eye His native splendor) the one was the mirrour of the Law, the second is the works of the Creation, and the third is the Soul of man, which He Himself hath told us is framed after His own glorious Image.

As for the first mirrour, the Law; God knowing that *instinct*, or as we term it, *a natural conscience*, were compleat digests of all that man was to observe, He did make that mirrour very little, a volume of only two pages; but that mirrour is, of late, so mullered about, by marginal Notes and Commentars, that the mirrour it self is almost over-spread by them; and it is very observable, that in the holy Registers, the Law is still abridged, but we never see it enlarg'd: For, albeit the fundamental Laws of both Tables were packed up in narrow bounds, yet our Saviour sums them in these two, *fear the Lord thy God with all thy heart*, and, *love thy neighbour as thy self*. And the Apostle *Paul*, in his Divine Epistles, professes, that he desires to know only Christ, and Him crucified: So, that I am confident, that if our Savi-

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our were to preach in perſon, once more to the world; He would enveigh againſt our Caſuiſts, as much as He did againſt the Jewiſh Talmudiſts; for, the one as well as the other, are equally guilty of burdening the ſhoulders of weak Chriſtians, with the unneceſſary traſh of humane inventions. For, I remember to have ſeen a late Caſuiſt, diſpute contentiouſly amongſt his other caſes, whither Tobacco, taken in the morning, did break a commanded faſt or not? To which, after a feaverish conflict, his wiſdom, forſooth, returns this oraculous anſwer; *That if Tobacco be taken at the noſe, it breaks not the faſt, but if it be taken at the mouth, then it breaks the faſt.* Which, becauſe I made a Collaſterion betwixt the Caſuiſts and the Talmudiſts, I ſhall only mention out of the Talmude (which was the *Jews* comment upon the Law) a caſe, exactly parallel to this: wherein is decided, that if a man carry a burden on the Sabbath day, upon both his ſhoulders, then he is guilty of breach of Sabbath, but that he is not guilty if he carry it upon one ſhoulder. As to my owne private judgment, (which I ſubmit

I submit to my spiritual Tutors) I think, that seeing the Conscience of man, is the same faculty with the Judgment when conversant about Spiritual Imployments, (as the word συνειδησις, which imports a knowledge reflexive upon a man's own self, doth abundantly evidence) that therefore, as there are Judgments of different tempers; so there are likewise Consciences of different frames: and which vary as much amongst themselves, as natural constitutions do. And therefore, as the same Dose would prove noxious to one constitution, wherein another would find his health; so in one and the same act, that resolution may be saving to one Conscience, which may condemn another: for, seeing God hath kindled a torch in each mans breast, by whose flame he may see what path he should beat: in which sense it is said, *Prov.* 20. 27. *That the understanding of man is the Candle of the Lord*; and can that light mislead? And seeing man must be answerable according to what it prescribes to him, doubtless it is fitter that he should hearken to the reiterated dictates of his Conscience, than to the resolution of any School-casuist: and that

that for the same reason, that it is more rational to obey the Law it self, than the wisest Lawyer, who may either be deceived himself, or have a design to deceive others. For if God hath endued man with every thing necessary for working out the work of his own Salvation, with fear and trembling, He hath doubtless bestowed upon him an internal Touch-stone, by whose test he may discern betwixt good and evil; seeing to command man to walk uprightly, and not to bestow on him eyes to see the road, were to command a blind man to walk, and to punish him if he went astray. And as the composure of man's body, would be imperfect and manck, if he wanted a palate to discern betwixt the taste of what is wholesom, or what is putrid; So if the soul of man were not able to know its own duty, and by the palate of a natural Conscience, to difference betwixt lawful and unlawful: certainly the soul might be thought to be but ill appointed. Thus, beasts are by an intrinsick principle taught their duty, and do accordingly shun or follow what is convenient for them, without consulting any thing from without. And shall man be

be leſs perſpicacious, of more defective then theſe? As alſo ſeeing man is oftrimes by thouſands of occaſions, removed far from the aſſiſtance of Chair or Pulpit-informers; and in that his retiredneſs, hath moſt of theſe caſes to be reſolved: it were abſurd to think that he then wants ſufficiency of help for their reſolution. And it is moſt obſervable in Scripture, that men are oft check'd for qnenching the Spirit, but never for not conſulting Caſuiſts. I know it may be thought, that when the ſoul of man rages at ſometime in a Feaver of Luſt, Revenge, or ſome ſuch ſin, that then the Conſcience may rave; Yet I dare ſay, that albeit the ſoul, out of an inordinate deſire to enjoy its own pleaſures, may ſet its invention a work, to palliate the ſinfulneſs of what it deſires; yet by ſome ſecret knell, the Conſcience ſounds ſtill its reproof. And I dare ſay, that never man erred without a check from his Conſcience; nor that few have ſinned after an approbation obtained from his Conſcience of what he was about: and when we aſſent to theſe Doctors, is it not becauſe our Conſciences, or our Judgments (which are the ſame) aſſent, to what they

they inform? which evidences, that our Conſciences are more to be believed, then they, by that rule, *Propter quod unumquodq; eſt tale*, &c. but to convince us of the folly of our addreſſes to theſe Doctors, it may, and often doth fall out, that that may be a ſin in me, which a Caſuiſt pronounces to be none, as if my breaſt did ſuggeſt to me, that it were a ſin to buy Church-lands; if there-after I did buy them, it were doubtleſs a ſin, albeit my Doctors, following the Canons of their particular Church, aſſured me, that the ſale of Church-lands were no ſin in it ſelf. I am confident then, that this Caſuiſt-divinity, hath taken its riſe from the deſire Church-men had to know the myſtery of each man's breaſt, and to the end, nothing of import, might be undertaken without conſulting their Cell; perſwading men, that *in ordine ad ſpiritualia*, their Conſciences, and conſequently their Salvation, may be intereſted in every civil affair. And to confirm this, it is moſt obſervable, that this Trade is moſt uſed by *Jeſuits* and Innovators, who deſire to know all intrigues and ſubvert all States, whereas the Primitive Church knew no

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ſuch Divinity, neither have its Doctors left any ſuch Volumns.

It may be urged, that ſeeing the Conſcience is but a reflex act of the Judgment, that as the Judgment is an unſure guide, the Conſcience cannot pretend to be infallible; and that the one, as well as the other, is tutor'd by the fallacious principles of *ſenſe* and *cuſtom*: And I my ſelf have ſeen my Land-lady, in *France*, as much troubled in Conſcience for giving us fleſh to eat in Lent, as if ſhe had caſt out the fleſh of a Chriſtian to be devoured by Dogs; and ſo Atheiſm may attribute to cuſtom, theſe inclinations whereby we are acted on to believe a Deity; and may tell us, that the Mahumetans find themſelves as much prickt in Conſcience, for tranſgreſſing their Prophets Canons, as we for offending againſt the moral Law. And thus the adoring of a Deity might have at firſt been brooded in the Council-chamber of a Stateſ-mans head, and yet might have been, at that time by the vulgar, and thereafter by the wiſeſt pates, worſhipped with profound reſpects: Yet, if we pry narrowly into this conceit, we ſhall find in it ſomething

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of instinct previous to all forgeries possible. For, what was it (I pray you) which encouraged, or suggested to these Politicians, that such a thing as the Deity might be dissembled to their people for their imposing that cheat, pre-supposed some pre-existing notion of it? Or, how entred that fancie first in their wild heads? Or, how could so many contemporary, yet far distant, Legislators, fall upon the same thoughts, especially, it being so remote from *sense*; and for framing of which *idea*, their experience could never furnish a pattern? Conscience then must be something else then the fumes of Melancholy, or, Capricio's of Fancy; for else, roaring Gallants, who are little troubled, or can easily conquer all other fancies, would not be so haunted by these pricking pangs; which if they were not infallibly divine, behooved to be meerly ridiculous, and to want all support from reason or experience.

There is another syle of cases of Conscience, which is a Cadet of that same family; and these are such cases as were the brood of these late times, which, like Insects and unclean creatures, may be

be said *generari ex putri materiâ*; an instance whereof, was that famous Sister, who ask'd if she was oblig'd to execute her Cat for killing a Mouse upon the Sabbath. This was a Theology, taught by old doting Wives, and studied by State-expectants, who, to gain applause, and in hope to mount Preferments Saddle, made use of this gilded Stirrop. I shall not inveigh against this foppery, seeing it hath not possest mens conceit so long, as to have prescribed the title of Divinity; but, like a meteor, which, because it is fixt to no Orb, and is but a mass of inflamed vapours, doth therefore disappear immediately, how soon its substance flashes out; and its ashes are now entomb'd in the same clay with its brother twain, that pious *Non sense*, wherin God Almighty was treated with in familiar and not in superiour.

Chap. VIII.

Of the Scriptures.

AS God did light the Candle of a private Conscience, in each private breast; So hath He hung up the lamp of the Scriptures, in the body of His Church; and these we may call the Conscience of the Church, whilest triumphant. Which some, by the breath of their vanity, and storms of their passion, endeavour to blow out; whilst others, make no other use of its Light, then to shew them where to find a jest. And within the arms of this division, lie folded, all the prophane race of mankind. As to these first (who should be first, because they are Satan's first-born, and so deserve a double portion of this reproof) they contend, that the Scriptures are written in a mean and low stile; are in some places too mysterious, in others too obscure; contain many things incredible, many repetitions, and many contradictions. But these miscreants should consider,

consider, that much of the Scriptures native splendor is impaired by its Translators, who fearing to fall within the verge of the curse pronounced against such as should pair from, or adde to, any thing contained in that divine Book, were, and are willing, that their Translation should want rather the lustre, then meaning of the Original. As also of all Tongues, I believe the Hebrew admits least of a Translation; especially into Northern Languages: for as these Nations differ least in their expressions, who, because of their commerce or contiguity, have the most frequent converse: So doubtless, the *Jews* and we, by this Rule, should in language hold the least correspondence. And because there is no pure fountain of this Tongue left, besides the Bible, it must be hard to understand its expressions, wherein the Translators can find little or no help from the Variety and collation of Authors. And seeing this Book was penn'd indifferently, for all Ages, Nations, and Sexes; it was fit that its stile should have been condescending; for these who are to pull the fruit which hang low, whether these

who are low, cannot pull what pearches high. And it is very observable, that where the fruit is greatest and ripest, there the branch whereon it hangs, bows lowest. When God appeared to *Elijah*, 1 *Kin.* 19. there came first a terrible wind, thereafter a great earthquake, and then fire; and yet God was in none of these, but spoke in the shrill small voice. His divine Providence hath so order'd it, that our conviction cannot be ascrib'd to the hard of Eloquence nor slight of Logick, but meerly to the truth of what is therein represented; our Saviour, will with clay and spittle, illuminate our eyes, as He did these of the other blind man in the Gospel. And such is the strength of His divine Arme, that He can vanquish Sathan, misbelief and ignorance with any weapon. And as we think the Sun's circumference but little, because it is situated so far above us; So we conclude these truths and excellencies but mean, because they are plac'd above our frail reach, and will blame the Scriptures, when the fault lurks in our selves; that great [illegible] will cure us, like an artist, [illegible] for our disease, and

not like a *Charletan*, with perfumed and gilded nothings. It is not alwayes the best mettal, which carries the pleasingest *impressa*; nor doth the painted candle cast the cleerest light. There are many things in Scripture, which because of our frailty, appear (like a staff in the waters) to be crooked, albeit they be straight. Why *Abraham* should have kill'd his son *Isaac*; or the *Israelites* have borrowed and not restored the *Egyptian* Ear-rings, staggers not my belief; for these belong'd to God, and neither to *Abraham*, nor the *Egyptians*: and so God might have given order to any He pleased to receive them: and these who obey'd, were no more guilty then such are, who by order from the Master, receive what he did formerly lend to others. And as to its repetitions, they differ, no doubt, from one another; albeit we (who think all things removed, though by a little distance from us, of one shape) judge ill, in judging otherwayes. And as an excellent person hath well observed, God hath appointed these reiterated expressions, to be as so many witnesses, to con-

vince Hereticks and others, who should call the meaning of any one place in question, or wrest it by what precedes or followes it.

As to these others, in whom the wine of Gods consolations, (by being winded in the crackt vessels of their heads) turns into the tart vinegar of prophane Satyres, I condole their condition: for, that stomach must be very corrupt, wherein the best of aliment putrifies most; and probably, that indigested milk, being converted into excrementitious bile and humours, may cast them in a feaver which shal never cool to all eternity. I pitty likewise these, who, out of an inadvertent (and as they think, sinless) humour, jest with these divine truths; like foolish children, who love rather to sport with their meat then eat it. These, albeit they intend not to prophane Scripture, yet, they vilifie it: And we may say of the Bible as of taking of Gods name in our mouths, which must not only, not be done upon design, to blaspheme and diffame Him; but must not be taken but upon necessity, and, like the Shew-bread, must be used only when

when we are in straits. I have been too guilty of this last sin my self; and therefore, least I should make no atonement, I have rather resolved to appear before the world, in the dust and sackcloth of this silly Discourse, a Penance, really, to me very great.

When I consider how various and innumerable are the actions of men, and that in all these, they need particular instructions from above the Poles, I admire why there are so many passages in Scripture, from which our necessity may expect no assistance. And therefore least I should think, that in Scripture there is any waste of words, I am induced to believe, that there run many hid allegories from *Genesis* to *Johns Revelations*; wherein the mistical sense deserves likewise the name of God's word: Might we not have admired why the Story of *Hagar* and her bastard is there voluminously described, and what the Church or private Devotion was concerned therein, if *Paul, Gal.* 4. 24. had not discovered the mystery to us? By which things, another thing is meant: For, these two mothers are the

two Testaments, the one which is *Agar*, of mount *Sinai*, which gendereth unto bondage, *&c.* I might here relate many excellent allusions to prove this; but I shall satisfie my self with one which I did read in one Doctor *Everot*; who, preaching upon *Joshua*, 15. 16. *Then* Caleb *said, he who smiteth* Kirjath-sepher *and taketh it, even to him will I give* Achsah *my daughter to wife. And* Othniel *took it*, &c. saith, that *Caleb* signifies a *good heart*, *Kirjath-sepher* the *City of the Letter*, *Achsah* the *Vision*, *Othniel God's opportunity*. And so the mystical sense runs, a good heart saith, that whoever will take in (and smite, as *Moses* did the rock) the Letter of the word, shall have the vision which lurks under it discovered and given to him. And Gods own time is the only mean for accomplishing this. As also, it is most remarkable, that that City which was called *Kirjath-sepher* before it was taken in, or, *the city of the Letter*, was, after it was conquered, called *Debir*, which signifies *an Oracle*; so that the Word or Letter is no Oracle, till it be once, as it were, taken in and overcome. Since the read-

ing of which Sermon, I believe that one may profit more by an Hebrew Lexicon, then by a thousand English Lectures.

These who detract from Scripture, by attributing the production of miracles, to natural causes, do not much disparage the power of God, but (though against their depraved intention) cry rather up his omnipotency: For certainly, if these miracles were produced by secondary causes, then doubtless, that productive faculty was bestowed upon them by the Almighty; and if he can make the creatures produce such strange effects, much more is he able to effectuate them himself; as it is more difficult, for a great Master, to form curious and admirable Characters when he leads a scholars hand, then when he writes them with his own; for, such help may be called *resisting assistance*. I can not likewise but blame many of our Preachers, who rather break then open holy Texts; and rather make new meanings, suiting with their private designs, then tell the meaning of the Spirit. Who would not have laugh'd to hear a Pres-

a Presbyterian observe, from the first chapter of *Genesis*, first verse, that whilst *Moses* relates what God made, he speaks nothing of *Bishops*; by which it was evident (said *Don Quixot*'s Chaplain) that *Bishops* were not of divine Institution a conceit as ridiculous as that of a Priest, who hearing *Maria* spoken of for to signifie *Seas*, did brag that he had found *the Virgine Mary* named in the old Testament. Albeit I think preaching no part of divine Worship, hearing being no adoration; yet, love I to go to Church, were it but to see a multitude met together, to confess that there is a God: But, when I go to hear I care not whom, knowing that Christ elected Fishermen to preach down infidelity, when it was in the ruff of it's pride: and that *Paul* (the most signal Trophee of our Christian Faith) was sent for confirmation, not to *Peter* or *James* at *Jerusalem*, but to *Ananias*, one of the meanest amongst the Disciples. And seeing our Salvation, by preaching, is a miracle; it is still so much the greater, by how much weaker the instruments are. When the Pulpit was a mount *Sinai*, from which

which the Law was thundered, or a mount of *Olives*, whereon our Saviours glorious transformation was to be seen, then were Sermons to be honoured; but since it is become a mount *Calvar*, where on our blessed Saviour suffers daily, by scandalous railings, Sermons are become unsavoury for the most part. I hate to see that divine place made either a Bar, whereat secular quarrels are, with passion, pleaded; or a Stage, whereon revenge is, by Satyres, satisfied; or, a School-chair, from which unintelligible questions are mysteriously debated; but amongst all these innovations, introduced be our infant Divines, I hate none more then that of giving reasons for proving the *Doctrine*, which being Scripture it self, can be proved by nothing that is more certain. As for instance, when the Doctrine is, *that God loved us freely*, how can this be proved more convincingly than thus, *my Text says it?* and that is *idem per idem*, a most unlogical kind of probation. When I then go to Church, I should love to spend my time in praises and prayers; which as they are the only parts of adora-

tion,

tion, so are they the natural imployments of the Church, either Militant or Triumphant: Yet, it displeases me to hear our young Pulpitires scritch and cry, like *Baal*'s Priests, as if God were no nearer them then the visible Heavens.

Chap. IX.

Of the Moral Law.

IT honours much our imployment, that God Almighty was the first and great Law-giver; and that our blessed Saviour stiles himself our Advocat. And it is an amazing wonder that we are tyed only by ten Laws; whereof seven were enacted doubtless for our advantage and respect; more immediatly the security of the creature then the honour of the Creator; and are such restraints as men behoved to have laid upon one another, and which nature layes upon us all. And albeit I laugh at the Jewish Cabala, which sayes, that the moral Law was written, two thousand years before *Moses*, in black letterss at the back of

a clear burning fire: Yet, can I not approve *Tertullians* wit, who endeavours to find all these ten in the prohibition made to *Adam*. There are indeed some sins which scarce a consequence can bring within the verge of these Commandments. As for instance, Drunkenness: Yet, these are such as are so destructive to our nature, that there needs no Law be made against them. So that the Priest hit witily, to whom that sin being confessed, enjoyned as a Pennance, their being drunk a second time; which makes me conclude, that if Drunkenness were to be ranged under any of these Laws, it would fall most naturally under that, *Thou shalt not kill*. Albeit the fourth Commandment seems to respect only the honour of God, and that the creature seems to be no wayes bettered by it: Yet, our more serious observation will discover, that all belabouring creatures, as it were, expect an ease the seventh day more then any other. Whether it be, that nature is by custome framed to that expectation, I cannot tell: But, we see that God choic'd that number to be the year of Jubile amongst

his

his own people, and that it is the period of all the several consistencies in our life, infancy, puberty, *&c.* And for this reason Physicians observe, that the child born in the seventh moneth is stronger then that which is born in the eighth; because in the seventh it is come to a knot, by passing whereof, in the eighth it is in a state of imperfection: But, what the mystery of this holy Climaterick is, I referr till we come to that Sabbath of rest, whereat we ordinarily arrive after seven times nine years hath snowed upon us.

We may think, that if God had intended, that one and the same day of the week should have been appropriated to have been a Sabbath, He had designed each day by a special term, and had commanded, that a day of such a designation, should have been sequestrated for a Sabbath; and that by designing only the seventh day He did leave a liberty to employ any day of the seventh for that use. Yet, it is remarkable, that *Moses* nor the Jewish Church durst not attempt the change of their new-years day; but that the Almighty was pleased to bestow a peculiar sanction upon that

that alteration: For, *Exod.* 12. 2. He commands, that the moneth wherein the Israelites came from *Egypt*, should be, by them, reputed the first moneth of their year. Wherefore, seeing each Nation chalks out a divers Sabbath, it would appear that there is something of humour in it as well as of Religion. The *Venerous* Mahumetan chooseth Friday, or, *dies Veneris*; The *dull Jew* dull *Saturns day*; The *warlick* Parthians Tuesday, or, *Mars-day*; The *cheery* Europeans *Sunday*. And albeit the Christians are influenced only by inspiration; yet, I am confident, that the heathens did follow that for Religion, which suited best with their natural temper. But this is a mediation which should travel nowhere beyond a mans private breast, lest it meet with enmity and beget scandal.

It would puzzle a heathen much to hear, that he who breaks one of these Laws, is guilty of the breach of all: But, it troubles not me, seeing all these Laws are made to shew our obedience, and the breach of any one of them shewes our contempt of him who the author of all.

all. And it may be this was typified in *Moses*'s breaking both Tables with one passionate fling, after he came down from the Mount: For, if this breaking of them had not been pre-designed for some hid end, doubtless he had been reproved for his negligence. However, we may from this learn the desperate nature of passion, which made *Moses*, who was the meekest man upon earth, break all the Laws of God in one act. It might be also argued, that seeing all the Laws of the second Table were enacted for, and respect ultimately, the advantage of Man, that where man is not wronged, there the Law cannot be broke. And thus, if a married Man should have liberty from his wife to take another woman, this could be no more reputed adultery, then it could be reputed theft to take what belongs to our neighbour, himself consenting; and that for this cause, *Jacobs* begetting children with his wifes maids, is not in Scripture reproved as adultery, because they were given to him by her self for that effect: but seeing the practice of all the world condemns this conclusion, far be it from me to express it further

further yet this is but a sophism, for seeing our bodies are the Temples of the Holy Ghost, we can no more bestow them upon such uses, then a Church-Warden can give the use of the Church to Taverners.

Chap. XXII.

Of the Judicial Law.

Albeit the Judicial Law (which may be justly called the judicious Law) is commonly reputed to be but the municipal Law of the *Jews*, yet seeing it was delivered in almost one contexture with that Law which was thundred from mount *Sinai* with so much pomp, and is ingrost in the Books of holy Truth, and seems nearlier related to reason then any other Law, I admire why it should not be religiously observed by all Nations; especially seeing, as it is, the exactest picture of Justice that ever was drawen, so it hath this of a picture in it, that it seems to look directly upon all who behold it, albeit they be placed (amongst themselves) in

directly opposite situations and stances. Thus this Law suits even with contrary tempers, and the unequal complexions of all Nations. I know that the Ceremonial Law is likewayes inſert amongſt the other holy Canons, and yet binds not us who live under the juriſdiction of the Goſpel: But, the reaſon of this ſeems to be, becauſe theſe did immediately concern the *Jewiſh* Church, and were converſant about theſe holy things. And ſo, ſeeing the Old Teſtament is a deſcription of their Hierarchy, and of God's way of working in theſe times, I wonder not to ſee the Ceremonies amidſt other ſacred Truths, and yet not obſerved, ſeeing they are expreſly abrogate. But, if the judicial Law, which reſpected not the Hierarchy of that Church, was obligatory only whileſt the *Jewiſh* State was in being, I admire why the Spirit of God took ſo much pains, firſt to pen it, and then to deliver it ſo Canon-like to poſterity. And ſince it is a principle in Law and reaſon, that Laws muſt ſtill ſtand in vigor till they be expreſly abrogate, and muſt not be derogated from by conſequences or preſumptions, I admire why this

this Law, which God hath enervate by no express Text, should be now look'd upon as Statutes no-wise *A-la mode*. It is true, that our Saviour, when the woman, convicted of adultery, was brought to Him, did not, according to that Law, pronounce the sentence of death against her; whence some think, that Churchmen, following their Masters example, should not give their suffrages in criminal cases, and have only δίκην ἀναιμάκτην, a bloodless Jurisdiction; for, they are appointed to be Nurses, not Chyrurgeons. But, it is as true, that our Saviour professed in all the tract of His life, that He came not to be a Judge in things temporal, and His design in that place was only to convince them of their own sins, and not to absolve her, not to abrogate the Law: and therefore He desired him who was freest from sin, to cast the first stone at her. And whereas it is conjectured, that these words which our Saviour stoop'd down to write in the clay, immediately thereafter was an abrogation of that Law; this is Geomancy more wilde, then any lesson which is alledged to have bin read in the mysterious

face of Heaven, and should never be taught but in a Rabbies Cabalistick Gown. And whereas it is alledged that there are many precepts in that *corpus Juris*, which respects only the humor of the *Jews*, I admire why that can be urged; for certainly, theft, murder, and these other crimes punished there, are the same crimes which reigns amongst us; and so why not punishable after that same manner? Neither are the humors of these *Jews* more different from ours, then was the *genius* of the *Romans*; and yet few or no Nations refuse to cast their modern Laws in that antique mould. And it is very probable, that as God did, in the moral Law, teach man how to be just in his own actions, so he would likewayes instruct him, by a judicial Law, how to administrate Justice to others.

What can perpetuate a Law more then that the Authority whereby it is enacted should be obligatory in all ages, and the reason whereon it is founded should be eternal? and in what Laws do these two qualities appear more, or so much, as in the judicial Laws of the *Jews*, where the eternal Law-giver was Legislator, and the occasion,

occasion, productive of them, seemed rational (and necessary) to His infallible omniscience? and if in any of these statutes, our purblind Judgments cannot see a present conveniency, we should rather impute that to our own simplicity, then charge it as a guilt upon His divine Statutes; and are there not many municipal Laws in each Country, which have no hedge about them to keep them untrampled upon by wanton and too curious wits? But, that excellent Maxime, *Omnium quæ fererunt Majores nostri, non est reddenda ratio, neque certa sunt, incerta redderentur*; a reason must not be rendred for all that our Ancestors have enacted, lest what is now certain, become then uncertain. Albeit a Law enacted only by humane Authority, seem unreasonable or inconvenient; yet, it retains its vigor till it be abrogate by the same, or a higher Authority, then that whereby it was first statuted; and the Law sayes, that *nihil est tam naturale quam unumquodque eodem modo dissolvi quo colligatum est*. And, seeing the moral and judicial Laws are twisted so together, and are oft incorporated in one statute, as *Levit.* 20. 10. *Deut.* 22.

22. where adultery is forbidden, and the adulterer is to die the death: how can we think the one half of this Law obligatory for ever, and yet neglect it's other half, wherein the punishment is specified, and which appears to have been the scope of the divine Law-giver? For, the world needed not so much to have been acquainted, that adultery was a sin, as that that sin deserved death; and if we allow our capricious humor the liberty to reject what we think inconvenient, we may at last arrive at that pitch of licentiousness, as to abrogate, by our practice, whatever choaks our present humor.

There are many things much mistaken in that Law, which makes the dissonancy betwixt it and our Law, appear so much the greater. As for instance, it is concluded, that by that Law, no theft was punishable by death; whereof this is given as a reason, because there is no proportion betwixt the goods and life; and that all that a man hath he will give for his life; whereas this argument would prove, that no guilt but murder should be punished with death; and so this dart rather flies over then hits the mark at

which

which it is level'd. And if this argument concluded, why should adultery have been punished with death by that Law, seeing there seems no proportion betwixt that guilt and death? For, if *vita & fama* be in Law *æquiparat*, by that same Law, *pecunia est alter sanguis*. But, if there be no proportion betwixt goods and life, and if the punishment of theft, when it's aggrag'd to it's greatest height, cannot, in their opinion, reach so far as to be capital: why was it, that by that Law nocturnal theeves might have been killed by those who found them? *Exod.* 22.2. For, it appears against reason, that more should be permitted to a private and passionate party, than to a disinterested Judge. And it is clear by 2 *Sam.* 12. 5. that theft was in some cases capital; For, there *David* vows, that he who took his neighbours one sheep, and spared his own many, should surely die; which being spoke by a just King to an excellent Prophet, and not reproved, must not be thought a flash of passion, but a well-founded sentence. Were not likewayes two theeves crucified by the *Jews* at the same time with our ever glorious Saviour?

which must not be thought a Romish execution, seeing the Law of the Romans allowed no such punishment for theft; I judge therefore, the reason why murder and adultery were punished with death, rather than all thefts, to have been, because theft may be repaired by restitution, but murder and adultery cannot. And albeit the judicial Law commands restitution only in the theft of an ox or sheep, (things of small moment, and which may be stollen to satisfie rather hunger then lust) yet, I see no limits set to Judges, commanding them not to inflict a capital punishment in extraordinary cases: For certainly, he who steals, may, for ought he himself knows, be about the committing of murder, seeing to steal what should aliment any poor one, is, in effect, the same thing as to murder him. It is much controverted, if this Law prohibits self-murder, and I think it doth: For, we are commanded to love our neighbour as our self; and so, since we are commanded not to kill our neighbour, that same Law must likewayes forbid our killing of our selves. But the reason probably, why no expreſs Text did forbid that sin, was, because the

Spirit

Spirit of God knew that the natural aversion we have against death, would, in this, do more then supply a Law; and that these who would be so desperate as to neglect the one, would never be so pious as to obey the other. Or else, God hath been unwilling, by making such a Law, to intimate to the world, that such a sin might be committed. Yet, it seems strange, that many are in Scripture related, as *Saul's* and others, to have killed themselves, against whom no check stands registrated in holy Records. But, I stop here, intending to bestow a whole Tractat upon the judicial Law, a task hitherto too much neglected.

The second mirrour, wherein God Almighty is to be seen, is that of His Creatures, and in that a *Virtuoso* may contemplate in His infinite power, as in the other he may see His admirable justice: It is very observable, that when God, or His Prophets, would prove His greatness, the Sun, Orion, and the Leviathan, are made use of as arguments. And when the Spirit of God describes the inimitable knowledg of *Solomon*, bestowed upon him by God, as an extraordinary mark of His favour, he

sayes

sayes not, that he understood the quirks of Philosophy, or notions of Divinity; but, it is said, that he knew all from the Cedar of *Lebanon* to the Hysope that grows upon the wall. And in earnest, it is strange, that when man comes into the gallery of this World, he should take such pleasure in gazing upon these ill-drawn fictions, which have only past the pencil of humane wit, and should not fix his admiration upon these glorious creatures, which are the works of that great Master; in framing whereof, God is content to be said to have spent six days, to the end, that man might admire the effects of so much pains; whereas His omnipotency might, with one *fiat*, have summoned them all to appear, apparell'd in these gorgeous dresses which now adorns them. And it is as strange, that man, having that huge volumn of the Creation to revolve, wherein is such an infinite number of curious tale duces, to feast his eyes with curiosity, and to furnish his soul with solid knowledge; he should notwithstanding spend so much oyl and sweat, in spinning out *ens rationis, materia prima, potentia obedientialis*, and such

such like unintelligible trash, which, like cob-webs, are but envenomed dust curiously wrought. And because the Gross of mankind was so gross, as not to understand God's greatness by the abstract *idea's* which instinct presented to him: Therefore, to teach that sensual croud, by the truncheon-mantle of sense He hath bestowed upon them this mirrour, wherein they may see how infinite He is in power, who made *Nothing* so fruitful, as to bud forth in this glorious crop of creatures, which now inhabits the surface of Heaven and Earth.

Chap. XI.

Of Monsters.

I Admire that such Philosophers as have had their faces wash'd at the font, can allow of Monsters, and define them to be the preter-intentional works of nature, wherein nature miss'd of her design, and was not able to effectuate what she intended: For, if *nature* and *providence* signifie the same thing in the Dictionary

nacy of Christianity, it were blasphemy to think, that *Providence* could not be able to effectuate what it once designed. All the creatures are indeed but as clay in the hand of this great Potter; but, it were impious to think, that His Art can be mistaken in framing any Vessel: wherefore, I am apter to believe, that all these creatures which the Schools term *Monsters*, are rather the intentions, then errors of *nature*; and that as *nature* doth nothing without designe, so it doth nothing without success. And thus I rather admire nature in these, for her cunning variety, then upbraid her with insufficiency and weakness. Neither term I an Hermophrodite, man or woman, according to the prevalency of that Sex which predomines in it, no more then I think that the Painter, when he hath delineated curiously an exact Mermaid, resolved to draw neither a Woman or fish, and not one distinct creature, piec'd up of both. And doubtless this error did at first proceed from mans vanity, who concluded, that every frame which answered not that idea, which resides in him, was the effect of *chance*, and not of *nature*; as if na-

ture

sure had been obliged to leave in the bibliothick of his head, the Original of all such Pieces as was to pass it's press.

Seeing God, in His survey of the Creation, called all that He had made good, because they were useful, I conclude, that these are the best which are the most useful. And albeit I condemn prodigality of ignorance; in preferring a Diamond to a Capon or Sheep; yet, do I not condemn such of vanity, as shine with these sparkling creatures; For, since God made *nothing*, which He did not destinate for some use, and seeing most of these serve for no use else, doubtless, the wearing of them is most allowable. Yea, can I not allow of these gaudy compounds, which men create to themselves; as if something had been still wanting after the Creation was finished: wherein man could supply God, and Art Nature. The bestowing of a hundred pounds upon a Tulip, or a thousand on a Picture, are not to me the meer rants of luxury; but are courses pre-ordained by the Almighty, for returning to poor Artisans that money, which oppression did at first most injustly screw from their weary hands.

hands. It is our ignorance of nature's mysteries which perswades us, that some, if not most of the creatures, serve rather for beautifying the universe, then for supplying necessity; an error which experience daily confutes: So, those herbs which of old cloathed only the uninhabited mountains, do now deserve their own place in Apothecaries shops. And it is most observable, that the Scurvy grows nowhere but where the disease rages, which is cured by it. Seeing God loved variety in the Creation, He cannot hate curiosity in man, these two being correspondents; and the one without the other would be but as flowers to the blind, or musick to the deaf. I laugh at the fruitless pilgrimages of such as travel to *Joppa* or *China*, to satisfie their curiosity; there being a *Tredaskins* closet in each Tulip, and a *Solomon*'s Court in each Lilly of the field. And seeing mens tempers are so various, it was no wonder that the creatures (which were made for his use) should have been made proportional to his humor: But, seeing art hath in many things copied Nature to the life, I think not the Symmetry nor variety to be seen amongst the

the creatures such an infallible argument for proving the being of a God, as is *instinct*, which all the art of men and Angels cannot counterfeit; and herein is it, that that grand Magician must acknowledge the finger of his Maker, seeing here his own art fails.

These who expect equal excellency in all the parts of this curious Fabrick, do not understand wherein its Symmetrie consists. All the strings of an Instrument sound not equally high, and yet they make up the harmony: the face of the earth looks in some places deform'd and patcht; and yet it is there the mother of rich mines (as if God intended to bestow a great portion where He bestows an ill face) and what we think deformities, were placed there as patches, and are no more blemishes, then the spots are to the leopards.

I confess, that at first it puzled much my enquiry, for what end these Mountains were made so near neighbours to the divided clouds: and I once imagin'd, that these were rather the effects of the flood, then creatures at first intended; and were but the rubbish and mud which these impetuous waters had heap'd

up

up in a mass. But, I was thereafter dissuaded from this conjecture, by the 8. Chap. *Prov.* where wisdom, proving it's antiquity, says, that it was with God before the Heavens were prepared, and the Mountains setled; by the scope of which Text, it is clear, that the Heavens, Hills, and the rest of the Creation, are said to bear one date. It is then more probable, that God foreseeing that the lust of conquest would, like the Needle of the Compass, look on Noth; as is evident by comparing all the Monarchies (first the *Assyrian*, then *Grecian*, then *Roman*, now *German*) did therefore bound ambition, as it were with high Hills, (albeit finite Ambition hath found a way to climb over them) as if He told them, that they should march no further. Thus, it is very observable, that the northern parts of one Kingdom, are alwayes more barren then the Southern limits of the Countrey which lies to the North of it. The North of *England* more mountainous and barren then the south of *Scotland*, albeit it lye nearer the Sun; the South of *England* more pleasant and fertile then the North of *France*; and the South of

France

France then the north of *Italy*, &c.

We must likewayes consider, that nature bruised its face so when it fell in *Adam*, that it did then contract many of these blemishes which now deform it; and that as it waxes old, its native beauty is the more deformed by furrowed wrinkles. We cannot judge what it was in health, by its present distempered condition, wherein it groans and travelleth in pain, as the Apostle tells us. And the differences betwixt these two states may be known from this, that God, when He compleated the Creation, saw that all was good; whereas *Solomon*, having reviewed it in his time, saw all to be vanity and vexation of spirit.

Chap. XII.

Of Man and his Creation.

The third mirrour, wherein God is to be admired, is *Man*. This is that noble creature which God was pleased to mould last of all others, not willing to bring him home, till by the preceding

Creations He had plenished his house abundantly for him. And albeit in the creation of all other creatures, it is only said, that God spoke and it was: Yet, when Man was to be framed, the cabinet Council of Heaven was called, and it is said [*let us*] as if more art had been to be shewed here, then in all the remanent Fabrick of the terraqueous Globe, and glorious Circles of Heaven. It is likewise very observable, that albeit all the fishes of the Sea were formed by one word, all the beasts of the field by one act, *&c.* Yet, God was pleased to bestow two upon the creation of *Man*; by the first, his body was created out of the dust, and thereafter, was breathed in, his soul. And albeit transient mention is only made of all other Creations; yet the history of Mans Creation is twice repeated, once, *Gen.* 1. 27. and again, 2. 7. And, lest that foreseen deformity, wherewith he was to be besmeared after his fall, should make it be questioned, that at his first creation he had received the *impressa* of Gods Image, this is oft repeated: For, in the 26. *v. Gen.* 1. it is said, *Let us make man in our image*; and then again,

again, *and after our likeneſs*. And in the 27. *verſe*, *So God created man in his own image*; and again immediately thereafter, *in the image of God created he him*. Yet, I am confident, that this image is ſo bedabled in the mire of ſin, and ſo ſhattred by its firſt fall, and this divine *impreſſa*, and print, ſo worn out, by our old and vicious habits, that, if this genealogy had not been ſo oft inculcated, we could not but have called it in queſtion, albeit our vanity be ready enough to believe a deſcent ſo royal and ſublime. Wherefore I muſt again admire the folly of Atheiſts, who, by denying a Deity, cloud their own noble birthright.

But, albeit man be made after Gods Image, yet, that can be no argument to conclude, that therefore God may be made after mans image, or repreſented under his figure, as the Anthropomorphits fooliſhly contend, no more, then if we ſhould conclude, that becauſe a Copy may be taken of an Original, therefore an Original may be taken of a Copy. Neither is this repreſentation ſalv'd from being idolatry, by alledging that the image is

not worshipped, but God, who is repre-sented by it: For, it hath been well ob-served by an ancient Father, that idola-try in Scripture is called adultery: And it is no good excuse for an adul-teress, that she did lye with another be-cause he represented her Husband to her, and resembled him as a Coppy doth its Original: Yet, seeing nothing is roomed in our judgement and appre-hension, but what first entred by the wick-et of sense, it is almost impossible for man to conceive the *idea* of any thing but vested with some shape, as each mans pri-vate reflections will abundantly convice him.

As the boundless Ocean keeps and shews its well drawn images, whilst it stands quiet, with a face polisht like a chrystal cake, but loses them immedi-ately, how soon its proud waves begin to swell and enrage, to spit its froathy foam in the face of the angry Heavens; so, whilst a Stoical indolency and Christian repose smooths our restless spirits, it is on-ly then, that the soul of man can be said to retain that glorious image of God Al-mighty, with which it was impressed at

its

its created nativity. But, when the waves of choler begin to roar, or the winds of vanity to blow, then that glorious image is no more to be discerned in him, then the shadows and representations of as-looking objects are to be seen and discerned in the disquieting bosom of the troubled waters.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the immortality of the soul.

THe stings of a natural conscience, which, according to each mans actings, create to him either agues of fear, or paradises of joy, do by these ominating presages, convince us of the immortality of the soul; and seeing we see its predictions, both in dreams, in damps of melancholy, and such like enthusiastick fits, followed by suitable events; why may we not likewayes beleive its predictions as to its own immortality, it being the prudence of a *Virtuoso* to lay hold of every mean, which may allay the rage of his hereditary misfortunes? And to

what end would the soul of man receive such impressions of fear and hope, if, by its mortality, it were not to be stated in a condition, wherein its fears and hopes were to have suteable rewards or punishments? Moreover, seeing God is just, He will punish and reward: and therefore, seeing he punishes and rewards not men according to their merits, or demerits here, there must be doubtless a future state wherein that is to be expected. But, that which convinces my private judgment most of this truth, is, that the noblest Souls, and the sharpest-sighted, do, of all others, most desire the state of separation, and have the weakest attaches to this life; which must doubtless proceed from an assurance of immortality, and that it hath, from the *Pisgah* of its contemplation, got a view of the spiritual *Canaan*: For, seeing the brutishest of creatures abhors annihilation, as the most aversable *ill* in nature, doubtless the soul of man, which is the most divine of all creatures, would never appete this separation, if by it it were to be extinct and to be no more. And how absurd

ſurd were it to believe, that mans ſoul ſhould be made after Gods image, and yet conclude it mortal, a quality repugnant to any thing that is divine? As alſo, how can the ſoul be thought to periſh with the body, ſeeing theſe accidents which deſtroy the body cannot reach it? how can the heat of a fever burn, or rheumes drown, that which is not corporeal and cannot be touched? And, ſeeing mans leaſt peccadilio againſt God Almighty, is againſt one who is infinit, were it not abſurd to think, that it could be proportionally puniſhed in the ſwift glaſs of mans ſhort life? then which, nothing is more finit, or ſooner finiſhed.

As the ſoul is Gods Image, So its products are the Images of His admirable operations. Do not Mathematicians creat Eagles, Doves, and ſuch like automatas? And ſpring not flowers from the Chymiſts glaſſes? And thus art, which is mans off-ſpring, doth ape nature, which is the workmanſhip of the Almighty: and therefore, ſeeing the ſoul can with one thought graſp both the Poles, can dart out it's conceits as far as the

furtheſt borders of the imaginary ſpaces, create worlds and order, and diſorder, all that is in this which is already created; its ſtrange to think it to be either corporeal or mortal: For, if it were corporeal and a maſs of blood, its actings would be ſlent and dull, neither could its motions be ſo nimble and winged, as are theſe of our agile ſpirits. It were impoſſible for our narrow heads, to inn all theſe innumerable *ideas* (which are now in them) if theſe were all corporeal; and if theſe be not corporeal, that which produces them moſt be doubtleſs incorporeal, ſeeing *ſimile generatur a ſimili*; and dull fleſh and blood could never produce ſuch ſpiritual emanations.

As the ſoul is Gods Image, ſo in this it reſembles Him very much, that we can know nothing of its nature without its own aſſiſtance: like a dark lanthorn, or a ſpy, it diſcovers every thing to us, except it ſelf. And becauſe it refuſes us the light of its candle, whileſt we are in the queſt of its myſteries; therefore it is, that our re-ſearches of its nature are gropeings in the dark: and ſo oftimes vain, if not ridiculous. *Avicenna*,

cenna, *Averroes*, and the remnant of that Arabian tribe, admiring its prodigious effects, did attribute our spiritual motions to assisting Angels, as if such admirable notions could not be fathered upon less sublime causes; which *Cardan* likewayes thinks, do offer their assistance and light to sensitive creatures, but that the churlishnesse of their matter will not suffer them to entertain such pure eradiations. This disparages so much humanity, making man only a statue, that it were against the souls interest to admit of any such *idea's*: For, as it tends more to the Artists praise to cause his products move from hid and internal springs, then from extrinsick causes; as we see in Watches and such like. So it is more for the honour of that great Artist, and more suitable to the being and nature of His creatures, that all its operations flow from it self, then from assisting but exteriour coadjutors; which makes me averse from *Aristotles* opinion of the motion of the spheres by intelligences. And it were absurd to think, that men should be blamed or praised for those effects which their assessour Angels could only be char-

charged with. The *Platonicks* alledged, that all souls existed before their incarceration in bodies; in which state of pre-existence, they were doted with all these spiritual endowments, which shall attend them in the state of separation; and that at their first allyance with bodies, their native knowledge was clouded *ἐπιστημης αναβολη, with the putting off knowledge for a time*, till by a *reminiscentia*, their intellectuals revived, as by a resurrection. And *Origen* added, that these souls were, according to their escapes, committed in the state of their primitive separation, yoaked with better or worse bodies; a shift taken, in all probability, by him, to evite the apprehension of Gods being unjust, for infusing innocent souls, in bodies which would infect them; and by drawing them into inevitable snares, at last condemn them; or at least their infusion was the imprisoning these who were not guilty; a difficulty which straits much, such as maintain that the soul is not *ex traduce*. What the hazard of this opinion may be, my twilight is not able to discover.

It

It may be, that the *Stoicks* mistake in making the souls of men to be but parcels, decerpt from that universal *anima mundi* (by which they doubtless meant God Himself) was occasioned by a mistake of that Text, that *God breathed into man's nostrils, the breath of life:* concluding, that as the breath is a part of the body which breathed it, So the soul behoved to be a part of that divine essence; from which, by a second consequence, they concluded, that the soul, being a part of that divine being, could not suffer, nor undergo any torments; as is asserted by *Seneca*, *Epist.* 29. *Cicero*, *Tusc.* 5. and defended by their successors, those primitive hereticks, the *Gnosticks*, *Maniches* and *Priscillianists*. But this bastard is not worth the fostering, being an opinion that God hath parts, and man real divinity, and is doubtless a false and flattering testimony given by the soul to it self. For, seeing the soul is, by divine Oracles, told us to be made after God's Image, it can be no more called a part of God, then the picture should be reputed a part of the Painter.

Aristotle

Aristotle like the devil (who because he knows not what to answer, answers ever in engines) tells us, that *Anima* is ἐντελέχεια, a terme fixed to exercise the empty brains of curious Pedants, and apter to beget, then explicat difficulties. Neither believe I, that his three souls, which he lodges in man, to wit, the rational, sensitive and vegetative, do differ more amongst themselves, then the will, understanding and fancy differ from the two last; So that his arithmetick might have bestowed five souls upon man as well as three: But seeing he, and many of his disciples, believe these to be three, and yet these three to be but one; I admire why they should be so nice, as not to believe that pious mystery of the holy Trinity: whereof in my opinion, his trinity of the soul is as appolit an emblem, as was the conceit of a simple Clown, who being askt, how he could apprehend the three glorious persons to be but one? did fold his garment in three pleates, and thereafter drew out all three in one.

As the herauldrie of our reason cannot blazen the souls *impressa*; So can it not help us to line out its descent: and such

such would appear to be the excellency of that noble creature, that heaven and earth seem to contend, the which shall be the place of its nativity. Divines (who are obliged to to contend for heaven, because they are its more immediate Pensioners) will have it to be created and infused; whereas Philosophers (ambitious to have so noble a compatriot, and willing to gratifie nature, which aliments their sublime meditations) contend, that it is *ex traduce*, and is in generation, the bodies other twinne. And albeit it would appear from Scripture, that God accomplish'd the Creation the first seven dayes, and that nature did then pass child-bearing: Yet, that, in my judgment, must be meant of the Creation of whole *species*, and not of *individuals*: And to press the souls not traduction, I shall lend only one argument, not because it is the best, but because it is my own. We see, that there where the soul is confess'd to be *extraduce*, as in bruites and vegetative creatures, that nature, as it were, with a pencil, copies the young from off the old. The young Lyons are still as rapacious and roaring

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as were their Syres, from whose loyns they discended: and the Rose being pous'd up by the salt nitre which makes it vegetative, spreads the same leaves, and appears with the same blushes or paleness that beautified its eye-pleasing predecessors. The reason of which continual assimulation, proceeds from the seeds having in its bosome all these qualities and shapes, which appear thereafter in its larger products, whereof they were but a *mappe* or *index*. Whereas man resembles never, at least not oft, these who are called his parents: the vitious and tall father, having oft low, but vertuous children; which shows, that the soul of man is not derived by generation, and that the soul bestowed upon the sons body, is most different and asymbolick to that which lodged in the father. And this may be further confirmed by that excellent passage, *Prov.* 20. 27. where it is said, that the *understanding of man is the candle of the Lord.* Our Soul is Gods Image, and none can draw that Image but Himself; we are the stamp of His divine nature, and so can only be formed by Himself, who is the glorious Seal. From

From this divine principle, that mans soul is made after Gods Image, I am almost induced to believe, that *prophesie* is no miraculous gift bestowed upon the soul at extraordinary occasions only, but is a natural (though the highest) perfection of our humane nature: For, if it be natural for the stamp, to have impress'd upon it all the traits that dwell upon the face of the Seal, then it must be natural to the soul, which is God's *impressa*, to have a faculty of foreseeing, since that is one of God's excellencies. Albeit I confess, that that Stamp is here infinitely be-dimm'd and worn off; as also, we know by experience, that men upon a death-bed, when the soul begins (being detached by sickness from the bodies slavery) to act like it self, do foresee and foretell many remote and improbable events: and for the same reason I do think predictions, by dreams, not to be extraordinary revelations, but rather the products natural of a rational soul. And if sagacious men can be so sharp-sighted in this state of glimmering, as to foresee many events which fall out, why may we not say, that man, if

if he were rehabilitate in the former ſtate of pure nature, might, without any extraordinary aſſiſtance, foreſee and propheſie? For, there is not ſuch a diſtance betwixt that foreſight and propheſie, as is betwixt the two ſtates of innocency and corruption, according to the received notion, which men have ſetled to themſelves of that primitive ſtate of innocency.

From the ſame principle, may it likewayes be deduced, that natural reaſon cannot but be an excellent mean, for knowing, as far as is poſſible, the glorious nature of God Almighty: He hath doubtleſs lighted this candle, that we might, by it, ſee Himſelf; and how can we better know the Seal, then by looking upon its impreſſion. And if Religion and its myſteryes, cannot be comprehended by reaſon, I confeſs it is a pretty jeſt, to hear ſuch frequent reaſonings amongſt Churchmen, in matters of Religion. And albeit *faith* and *reaſon* be look'd upon as *Jacob* and *Eſau*, whereof the younger only hath the bleſſing, and are, by Divines, placed at the two oppoſite points of the Diameter; yet upon a ſuperficial inquiry,

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it would appear by the Laws of his Country that *faith* is but sublimated reason, calcined by that divine Chymical fire of Baptisme; and that the soul of man hath lurking in it, all these vertues and faculties which we call Theological; such as *faith*, *hope* and *repentance*; for else *David* would not have prayed, *Inlighten Lord, my eyes, that I may see the wonders of thy Law*; but rather, *Lord, bestow new eyes upon me.* Neither could the opening of *Lydias* heart, have been sufficient for her conversion, if these pre-existing qualities had not been treasur'd up there formerly: So that it would appear, that these holy flames lurk under the ashes of corruption, until God, by the breath of His Spirit (and that wind which bloweth where it listeth) sweep them off: And that God, having once made man perfect in the first Creation, doth not in his regeneration super-add any new faculty (for else the soul had not at first been perfect) but only removes all obstructing impediments.

I CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Of Faith and reason.

I am alwayes ashamed, when I hear reason called the stepmother of faith, and proclaimed rebel against God Almighty; and such declared traitors, as dare harbour it, or appear in its defence. These are such fools as they who break their Prospects, because they bring not home to their sight the remotest objects; and are as injust as *Jacob* had been, if he had divorced from *Leah*, because she was tender-eyed: whereas, we should not put out the eyes of our understanding, but should beg from God the eye-salve of His Spirit for their illumination. Nor should we dash the Prospect of our reason, against the rocky walls of dispair; but should rather wash its glasses with the tears of unfeigned repentance.

Ever since *faith* and *reason* have been, by Divines, set by the ears, the brutish multitude

multitude conclude, these who are most reasonable to be least religious; and the greatest spirits to be the least spiritual: a conceit most inconsistent with that divine parable, wherein those who received the many talents, improved them to the best advantage, whilst he who had but one, laid it up in a napkin. And it is most improbable, that God would choose low shrubs, and not tall Cedars, for the building of his glorious Temple. And it is remarkable, that God, in the old Law, refused to accept the first born of an asse in sacrifice, but not of any other creature. And some, who were content to be called *Atheists*, providing they were thought Wits, did take advantage in this of the *Rabbis* ignorance, and authorized by their devilish invention, what was at first but a mistake: and this unriddles to us that mystery, why the greatest Wits are most frequently the greatest Atheists.

When I consider, how the Angels, who have no bodies, sinned before man; and that brutes, who are all body, sin not at all, but follow the pure dictates of nature;

I am induced to believe, that the body is rather injustly blamed for being, then that really it is, the occasion of sin; and probably, the witty soul hath in this cunningly laid over upon its fellow, that wherewith it self is only to be charged. What influence can flesh or blood have upon that which immaterial? no more sure then the case hath upon the Watch, or the Heavens upon its burgessing Angels? And see we not, that when the soul hath bid the body adieu, it remains a carcass, fit nor able for nothing? I believe, that the body being a clog to it, may slow its pursute after objects, and that it may occasion, indirectly, some sins of omission: For, we see palpably, that eating and drinking dulls our devotions; but, I can never understand, how such dumb Orators, as flesh and blood, can perswade the soul to commit the least sin. And thus, albeit our Saviour sayes, that *flesh and blood did not teach* Peter *to give him his true Epithets*; neither indeed could it: Yet, our Saviour imputes not any actual sin to these pithless causes. And seeing

our first sin hath occasioned all our after-sinning, certainly, that which occasioned our first sin was the main source of sinning, and this was doubtless the soul; for, our first sin being an immoderate desire of knowledge, was the effect and product of our spirit, because it was a spiritual sin; whereas if it had been gluttony, lust or such like, which seems corporeal, the body had been more to have been blamed for it. And in this contest, I am of opinion, that the soul wins the cause, because it is the best Orator.

Chap. XV.

Of the fall of Angels, and what their sin was.

What was the occasion of the first ill, is much debated (and most deservedly) amongst Moralists; for, that which was good could not produce that which was evil, seeing that which works mischief cannot be called good. Nor can

we aſcribe the efficiency of the firſt evil to evil: for then the queſtion recurres, what was the cauſe of that evil? And by this, the ſuppoſition is likewiſe deſtroyed, whereby the evil enquired after, is ſuppoſed to be the firſt evil: but, if we enquire, what could produce in the Angels that firſt ſin, where by they forfeited their glory? we will find this diſquiſition moſt myſterious. And it is commonly beleived, but by what revelation I know not, that their pride cauſed their fall; and that they catcht their bruiſe in climbing; in deſiring to be equal to their Creator, they are become inferior to all their fellow Creatures. Yet, this ſeems to me moſt ſtrange, that theſe excellent ſpirits whoſe very ſubſtance was light, and who ſurpaſſed far, man, in capacity and underſtanding, ſhould have ſo erred as to imagine, that equality faiſable, a fancy which the fondeſt of men could not have entertained. And it were improbable to ſay, that their error could have ſprouted at firſt from their underſtanding; and to think it to have been

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so gross, as that fallen man doth now admire it: but, why may we not rather think, that their first error was rather a crookedness in their will, then a blindness in their judgment, and that they fretted to see Man, whom they knew to be inferiour to themselves by many stages, made Lord of all that pleasant Creation, which they gazed on with a stareing maze. And that this opinion is more probable, appears, because this Sin was the far more baiting, seeing it appeared with all the charmes, wherewith either pride, vanity or avarice could dusk it; and explicats better to us the occasion of all that enmity with which that Serpent hath alwayes since persued silly man. But, whither God will save just as many believers as there are fell of the Angels, none can determine; neither can it be rationally deduced from that Scripture, *Statuit terminos gentium, juxta numerum Angelorum Dei.* But, if it please God so to order it, it will doubtless aggrage their punishment, by rackling their disdain.

And seeing the Angels have never obtained a remission for this crime, it is probable, that the correspondent of their sin is, in us, the sin against the holy Ghost.

The sin of the Angels was the sin against the holy Ghost.

For, if their *lapse* had been pardonable, some one or other of them had in all probability escaped; but, if this was not that unpardonable sin, I scarce see where it shall be found. For, to say that is a hating of God, as *God*, is to make it unpracticable rather then unpardonable: For, all creatures appete naturally what is good, and God, as *God*, is good; So that it is impossible that He can be hated under that reduplication.

It may be likewise conjectured, that voluntary and deliberate sacrilege is the sin against the holy Ghost; because *Ananias* and *Saphira*, in with-holding from the Church a part of the price for which they sold their lands, are, by *Peter*, said to have lyed, not to man, but to the holy Ghost, and his wife is there said to have tempted the Spirit: but

but, seeing both of them resolved to continue in the Church (a resolution inconsistent with the sin against the holy Ghost) And seeing many sins are more hainous, I cannot interpret this lying to the holy Ghost to be any thing else but a sin against light, in which most penitents have been involved, albeit, I confess, this was a gross escape, seeing it rob'd of God of His *omniscience*, and supposed that He was not privy to such humane actings as have not the Sun for a witness. I do then conclude, that the sin against the holy Ghost may rather be a resolute undervaluing of God, and a scorning to receive a pardon from Him: and this is that which makes the Angels fall irrecoverable, and like the flaming sword, defends them from their re-entry into that Paradise from which they exile. And albeit to say, that the Angels rebellion flows from God's denying them repentance, may suit abundantly well with His unstainable justice; yet, it is hard to reconcile it with his mercy. And this makes my private judgment place the unpardonable-

donableneſs of this ſin, not in God's Decree, but in their obduration and rebellious impenitency: And the reaſon why theſe who commit this ſin are never pardoned, is, becauſe a pardon is never ſought. That place of Scripture, wherein *Eſau* is ſaid to have ſought the bleſſing with tears and not to have found it, aſtoniſhes me: Yet, I believe, that if his tears had ſtreamed from a ſenſe of his guilt more then of his puniſhment, doubtleſs he had not wept in vain; and in that he tear'd, he was no more to be pytied, far leſs pardoned, then a Malefactor, who upon the ſcaffold grants ſome few tears to the importunity of his tortures, but ſcornes to acknowledg the guilt of his crime; *for, pain by controlling our bodies, ſtrains out that liquid matter, which thereafter globs it ſelf in tears*; there could come no holy water from the pagan font of *Eſay*'s eyes; and if his remorſe could have pierc'd his own heart, it had eaſily pierc'd Heaven. Whilſt others admire, I bleſs God, that He hath cloſed up the knowledge of that unpardonable ſin under

der his own privy Seal: for, seeing Sathan tempts me to sin with the hopes of an after pardon, this bait is pull'd off his hook, by the fear I stand under, that the sin to which I am tempted, is that sin which can expect no pardon. And albeit it be customary amongst men to beacon and set a mark upon such shelves and rocks as destroy passengers; yet, that is only done where commerce is allowed and sayling necessary; But, seeing all sin is forbidden, God was not obliged to guard us with the knowledge of that sin, no further then by prohibiting us not to sin, but to stand in awe.

Chap. XVI.

Of Mans fall.

That first sin whereby our first Parents forfeited their primitive excellencies was so pitiful a frailty, that I think we should rather lament, then enquire after it. To think that an apple had

had in it the seeds of all knowledge; or that it could assimilate him to his Creator, and could, in an instant, sublimate his nature, was a frailty to be admired in one of his piety and knowledge. Yet, I admire not that the breach of so mean a Precept was punish'd with such appearing rigor, because, the easier the command was, the contempt was proportionally the greater; and the first crimes are by Legislators punished, not only for guilt, but for example: But I rather admire what could perswade the facile world to believe, that *Adam* was created, not only innocent, but even stored with all humane knowledge; For, besides that, we have no warrant from Scripture for this allegiance, this his easie escape speaketh far otherwayes.

And albeit the Scripture tells us, that man was created perfect: yet, that inferres not that man was furnished with all humane knowledge: For, his perfection consisted in his adoring of, and depending upon God, wherein we see those are exactest, whose

whose judgments are least pestered with terrestrial knowledge, and least diverted with unnecessary speculations. And thus it appears, that these Sciences, after which his posterity pants, were not intended as noble *appanages* of that rational soul, but are rather toyish babies buskt up by faln man, whereby he diverts himself from reflecting too narrowly upon his native frailty. And thus Scripture tells us, *that God made man perfect; but that he sought out to Himself many inventions*; where perfection and invention seem to be stated as enemies; and it is palpable that these Sciences, which are by us lawrel'd and rewarded, are such as were inconsistent with that state of innocency, such as Law, Theology and Physick. And as for the rest, it is absur'd to think, that *Adams* happiness did consist in the knowledge of these things which we our selves account either impertinent or superfluous. But, that which convinces me most of this, is, that we forfeited nothing by *Adams* fall, which Christ's death restores not to us; wherefore, seeing Christ by his

his own, or his Apostles promises, hath not assured us of any sub-lunary or school knowledge; nor hath our experience taught us, that Sciences are entailed upon the Saints. I almost believe, that *Adam* neither possest these before, nor yet lost them by his fall. Neither think I St. *Paul* the more imperfect, that he desired to know nothing but Christ and him crucified: So that the difference betwixt *Adam* and his successors, stood more in the straightness of his affections, then in the depth of his knowledge. For, albeit it be believed that the names whereby he baptized the creature, were full histories of their natures written in short hand; yet, this is but a conjecture authorized by no holy Text. It is a more civill error in the Jewish Talmudists, to think that all the creatures were brought to *Adam*, to let him see that there were none amongst them fit to be his companion, nor none so beautiful as *Eve*, then it is in their Cabalists to observe, that the Hebrew word, signifying *man*, doth, by a transposition of letters, signifie likewayes,

wayes, *benediction*; and the word signifying *woman*, makes up *malediction*. If we should take a character of *Adam's* knowledge from the Scriptures, we shall finde more imprudence charged upon him then upon any of his Successors: For, albeit the silly woman was not deceived without the help of subtilty, yet *Adam* sinned upon a bare suggestion, and thereafter was so simple, as to hide himself when God called him to an account, as if a thicket of trees could have sconced him from his all-seeing Maker; and when he was accused, was so simple, as to think his wives commands sufficient to exoner him, and so absurd, as to make God Himself sharer with him in his guilt, *the woman whom thou gavest me*, &c.

There is more charm in acquiring new knowledge, that in reflecting upon what we have already gain'd, (as if the *species* of known objects did corrupt, by being treasur'd up in our braine) And this induces me to believe, that our scantness of native knowledge, is rather a happiness then a punishment; the Citi-

zens

zens of *London* or *Paris* are not so tickled by the sight of these stately Cities, as strangers who were not born within their walls; and I may say to such as by spelling the Starres desire to read the fortunes of others, as our Saviour said to *Peter*, when he was desirous to know the horoscope of the beloved Apostle, *What is that to thee?* What can it advantage us to know the correspondence kept amongst the Planets, and to understand the whole Anatomy of natures *skeleton*; in gazing upon whose parts, we are oftimes as ridiculous as children, who love to leaf over taliduce Pictures? for in both variety is all the usury that can be expected, as the return of our time and pains; and if we pry inly into this small mass of our present knowledge, we shall find, that our knowledge is one of the fertilest fountains of our misery: For, do not such as know that they are sick, groan more heavily then a Country Clown, who apprehends nothing till extremity create in him some sense? And doubtless the reason why children and ideots endure

more,

more, and drunken men escape more dangers then others, is, because albeit they cannot provide such apt remedies, yet, they are less acquainted with what they feel then we are. Are not these who understand that they are affronted, more vex'd then such as are ignorant of these misfortunes? And these who foresee the changes and revolutions, which are to befall either their friends or their Countries, are thereby more sadly diseased, then he who sees no further then his nose. Our Saviour wept when He did foresee, that one stone of *Jerusalem* should not be left upon another; and when *Hazael* askt *Elisha* why he wept, he told him, it was because he did foresee what mischief *Hazael* was to do in *Israel*. Let us not then complain of the loss of *Adam's* knowledge, but of his innocency; we know enough to save us, and what is more then that, is superfluous.

Adam cannot be thought to have been the first sinner, for *Eve* sinned before him; So that albeit it seem a Paradox, yet it is most probable, that al-

beit *Adam* had for ever abstained from eating the *forbidden fruit*, his posterity had been still as miserable as now they are; seeing the guilt of either of the Parents had been sufficient to dash the innocence of the children. For, as the Scripture tells us, Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? And *David*, in that Text, which of all others speaks most expresly of original sin, layes the guilt upon her, and confesseth only, that his mother had conceived him in sin.

As *Adam* was not the first sinner, so the eating of the apple may be justly thought not to be the first sin; *Eve* having, before his eating the apple, repealed most falsely the Command. For, whereas God did assure them, *that in that day they did eat the fruit they should surely dye*: *Eve* relates it thus, *Ye shall not eat the fruit lest ye dye*, representing only that as a contingent which was most certain: and whereas God had only said, *ye shall not eat of the fruit of the tree*, *Eve* sayes, *God said, ye shall not touch it*; which it may be furnished the serpent this argument to cheat her; Ye see God

hath

hath deceived you, for the fruit may be touched without danger, why may it not be eaten without hazzard? and it is probable, that he hath failed in the one as well as in the other. But to abstract from this, it cannot be said, that the eating of the *forbidden fruit* was the first sin; for, before *Adam* did eat thereof, he behoved both to believe the Serpent and mis-believe his Maker, and thus *mis-belief* was the first sin: For after he had credited the Serpents report, he was no longer innocent, and so he did not eat the apple till after his fall. What wiser are these Divines, who debate, whither *Adams* falling-sickness and sin had become hereditary, if our predecessors had come out of his loins before he sinned, then those who combated for the largest share of the King of *Spains* gold, if it had been to be divided?

In the Almighties procedure against poor *Adam* for this crime, His infinite mercy appears to admiration; and God foreseeing, that man might sharpen the ax of justice too much upon the whet-

ſtone of private revenge, ſeems to have, in this proceſs, formed to him, an exact model of Inquiſition. For, He arraigns and cries *Adam*, *Adam*, *where art thou?* He ſhews him his dittay, *Haſt thou eat of the fruit whereof I commanded thee that thou ſhouldeſt not eat?* He allows him exculpation, *Who told thee?* and in order thereto, did examine the woman, upon whom *Adam* did transfer the guilt. And albeit nothing could eſcape His omniſciency, and that He did ſee *Adam* eat the Apple, yet, to teach Judges that they ſhould walk according to what is proved, and not according to what they are themſelves conſcious to, He did not condemn him till firſt he ſhould have a confeſſion from his own mouth. And thus, *Gen.* 18. 21. the Lord ſayes, *Becauſe the cry of* Sodom *is great---- I will go down and ſee whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it*, &c. And in the laſt place, albeit the fatal decree did bear, *In that day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die*; yet, were his dayes prolonged nine hundred and thirty years after the ſin was committed.

It

It is too curious a disquisition to enquire how God can be said to be merciful, mercy being the mitigation of justice, of which His pure nature cannot be capable, seeing whatever He wills is just: And so He cannot be thought in any thing which He wills, to recede from justice, and so can no more properly be said to be merciful, then one Act can be both the Law and the mitigation of the Law. But I will press no point of this nature, knowing that humble modesty is the best Theology.

Chap. XVII.

Of the Stile of Genesis.

The *Vatican* of Paganism cannot, for the maleness of it's stile, match that matchless Book of *Genesis*, whereof each sentence seems a quarry of rich meditations, and each word a spell, sufficient to conjure the Devil of *Delphos*. Might not that excellent expression, *Let us make man after our image*, convince

any of the being of a Trinity, who deny plurality of Gods? It is wonderful, that the Saturn-humoured Jew can, in in this passage, mis-take his own Saviour; and it is strange that he should not, from the triangular architecture of his own heart, conclude the Trinity of the Godhead, whose temple it was appointed to be. Albeit I be an admirer of this nurse of Cabalism; yet, I approve not the conceit of these doting Rabbies, who teach that God from His own mouth, dited both the words and matter of the *Pentateuch*; whereas, He furnished only to the other Prophets the matter and subject unphrased: for, not only did God promise, that he should put His words in their mouths, but likewayes, they preface thus their own propheſies, In the dayes of such a King, the Word of the Lord came to such a Propher, saying, *&c.* Neither is this conceit consistent with that high esteem, which they, (even in this) intend for their patron, *Moses*; seeing it allows him less trust from his divine Master, then the other Penmen of Scripture had reposed in them.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

Why Man fell.

THat brain hath too little *pia mater*, that is too curious to know why God, who evidences so great a desire to save poor man, and is so powerfull, as that his salvation needed never have run the hazzard, if His infinit wisdome had so decree'd, did yet suffer him to fall: For, if we enter once the list of that debate, our reason is took weak to bear the burden of so great a difficulty. And albeit it may be answered, that God might have restrained man, but that restraint did not stand with the freedom of mans will which God had bestowed upon him; yet, this answer stops not the mouth of the difficulty. For certainly, if one should detain a mad man from running over a precipice, he could not be thereby said to have wronged his liberty: and seeing man is by many Divines allowed a freedom of will, albeit he must of necessity do what

is evil, and that his freedom is salv'd by a liberty to choose only one of moe evils, it would appear strange why his liberty might not have consisted well enough with a moral impossibility of sinning, and might not have been abundantly conserved in his freedom to choose one of moe goods: yet, these reasonings are the calling God to an account, and so impious. For, if God had first created man surrounded with our present infirmities, could we have complained? Why then should we now complain, seeing we are but faln to a better estate then we deserved; seeing we stumbled not for want of light, but because we extinguish'd our own light; and seeing our Saviours dying for us may yet re-instate us in a happier estate then that from which we are now faln?

Albeit the glass of my years hath not yet turn'd five and twenty, yet the curiosity I have to know the different *limbo's* of departed souls, and to view the card of the region of death, would give me abundance of courage to encounter this King of terrors, though I were a Pagan:

But,

But, when I consider what joys are prepared for them who fear the Almighty, and what crazinesse attends such as sleep in *Methusalems* Cradle, I pity them who make *long-life* one of the oftest repeated Petitions of their *Pater-noster*; and yet these sure are the more advanc'd in folly, who desire to have their names enshrin'd after death in the airy monument of *fame*: Whereas it is one of the promises made to the Elect, *That they shall rest from their labours, and their works shall follow them.* Most mens mouths are so foul, that it is a punishment to be much in them: for my own part, I desire the same good offices from my good name that I do from my cloaths, which is to skreen me from the violence of exteriour accidents.

As these Criminals might be judg'd distracted, who being condemned to die, would spend their short reprival in disputing about the situation and fabrick of their gibbets; So may I justly think these *literati* mad, who spend the short time allotted them for Repentance, in debating about the seat of Hell,

and

and the torments of tortur'd spirits. To satisfie my curiosity, I was once resolv'd, with the Platonick, to take the promise of some dying friend, that he should return and satisfie me in all my private doubts concerning hell and heaven; yet I was justly afraid, that he might have returnd me the same answer which *Abraham* return'd to *Dives*, *Have they not* Moses *and the Prophets? if they hear not them, wherefore will they be perswaded though one should rise from the dead.*

CHAP. XIX.

A Refutation of the Millenarians.

THe *Millenar*'s Ephimerides, which assure us, that Christ shall reign a thousand years with the Saints on earth, is as sensual an opinion as that of the *Turks* who make heaven a brothel, wherein we shall satisfie our Venereous appetites; for the one shews the vain glory and vindictive humour of the Saints, as palpably as the other shews the lust of the Mahometans

humetans. If Christs reigning so many years be for convincing the world that he is the real *Messiah*, their heresie should have ante-dated his coming; and his reign should rather have begun long since, when many ages were to be converted, or at least it should not have been thrust out upon the salvege and border of time, when very few shall remain to be convinc'd: and if in this they intend a displaying of Christs glory, certainly they are mistaken; for what honour can it be for a King, to have his foot-stool made his Throne? So that I think, these poor Phanaticks have taken the patronage of this error rather by necessity then choice, all other opinions and conceits being formerly pre-engaged to other Authors.

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

The Author's Censure of this Essay, and an account of his Design.

AS I am not able, by the *Jacob's-ladder* of my merits to scale Heaven, so am I less able, by the *Jacob's-staffe* of my private ability, to take up the true altitude of its mysteries. I have travell'd no further in Theology then a *Sabbath-days* journey; and therefore, it were arrogance in me to offer a map of it to the credulous world: But, if I were worthy to be consulted in these spiritual securities, I should advise every private Christian, rather to stay still in the barge of the Church with the other Disciples, then by an ill bridled zeal, to hazard drowning alone with *Peter*, by offering to walk upon the unstable surface of his own fleeting and water-weak fancies, though with a pious resolution to meet our Saviour. For, albeit one may be a real Christian, and yet differ from the Church, which sayes, that

that the Wise men who came to bow before our Saviours Cradle-throne, were three Kings, and in such other opinions as these, wherein the fundamentals of faith and quiet of the Church are no ways concerned; yet certainly, he were no wise man himself, nor yet sound Christian, who would not even in these bow the flag of his private opinion to the commands of the Church. The Church is our Mother, and therefore we should wed no opinion without her consent who is our Parent; or if we have rashly wedded any, it is in the power of the Church and her Officials to grant us a divorce. As for my self, my vanity never prompted me to be standard-beater to any, either new Sect, or old Heresie; and I pity such as love to live like Pew-keepers in the House of God, busied in seating others, without ever providing a room for themselves. If there be any thing in this Discourse which may offend such as are really pious, it shall much grieve me, who above all men honour them most. What I have spoken against cases of Conscience and the like, strikes not against

their

their Christian fellowship and correspondence, but against the apish fopperies of pretending counterfeits. It shall alwayes be my endeavour for the future, rather to drop tears for my own sins and the sins of others, then yrk for their conversion: our prayers help such as never heard them, whereas these only who read our discourses are better'd by them. *Abrahams* prayers prevailed more with God (even for *Sodom*) then *Lot's* reiterated Sermons; and no wonder that the success be unequal, seeing in the one we have to do with a merciful God, whereas in the other we must perswade a hard-hearted people.

I intend not to purchase from posterity the title of *Reformer*, seeing most of these have faln under the same guilt; and have had the same fate, with that curious Painter, who having drawn an excellent *face*, as happily as could have been expected from the smoothest mirrour, did thereafter dash it afresh upon the suggestion of each intrant, till at last he reformed it from being any way like to the Original.

Divinity

Divinity differs in this from all other Sciences, that these being invented by mortals, receive growth from time and experience; whereas, it being penn'd by the omniscient Spirit of God, can receive no addition without receiving prejudice. It is most remarkable, that our Saviours Prayers, His Sermons and the *Creed*, delivered to us by his Apostles, were roomed up in farr narrower bounds then these of our times, which an hydropsie of ill concocted opinions hath swell'd beyond their true dimensions: many whereof have either been brooded by *vanity* or *interest*; or else ignorant and violent defendents being brought to a bay, by such as impugn'd their resolv'd-upon principles, have been forc'd to assert these by-blow and preter-intentional *tenets*; and having once floored them, have thereafter judg'd themselves concerned to defend them, in point of Scholastick honour. Some well-meaning Christians likewayes, do sometimes, for maintenance of what is lawfull and pious, think, that they may lawfully advance opinions, which otherwayes they would

would never have allowed of; and as in nature we see, that the collision of two hard bodies makes them rebound so much the further from one another: So opposition makes both parties fly into extremities. Thus I believe, that the debate betwixt *Roman-Catholicks* and *Protestants*, concerning the Virgin *Mary*, have occasion'd in some amongst both, expressions, if not heretical, yet at least undecent. Thus a great many *Confessions of Faith* become, like *Noah*'s Ark, a receptacle of clean and unclean: and which is also deplorable, they do, like ordinary Dyals, serve only for use in that one meridian for which they are calculated, and by riding twenty miles ye make them heterodox. I speak not this to the disparagement of our own Church, (which I reverence in all its Precepts and Practices) but to beget a blushing conviction in such as have diverted from it; and whose Conventicles, compared with our *Jerusalem*, resemble only the removed huts of those who live apart, because they are sick of the Plague.

I am

I am not at a maze, to see men so tenacious of contrary principles in Religion; for, man's thoughts being vast and various, he snatches at every offered suggestion, and if by accident he entertain any of these many, as a divine immission, he thereafter thinks it were blasphemy to bring that thought to the test of *reason*, because he hears that *faith* is above *reason*; or to relinquish it, because the common suffrage of his Country runs it counter, seeing he is taught even by them, that the principles of *belief* must not be chosen by the Pole.

And seeing *faith* is above *reason*, (albeit, as I said formerly, it would seem otherwise) I wonder not to see even the best temper'd Christians, think that which is not their own religion to be therefore ridiculous.

My design all alongst this Discourse, butts at this one principle, *that Speculations in Religion are not so necessary, and are more dangerous then sincere practice.* It is in Religion as in Herauldry, the simpler the bearing be, it is so much the purer and the ancienter. I will not say that our School-distinctions are the impres-

sions of the devils cloven foot; but I may say, that our piety and principles scarce ever grow after they begin to fork in such dichotomies; which, like *Jacob* and *Esau*, divide and jar as soon as they are born, and betwixt whom, the poor proposition, out of which both did spring, is like a malefactor, most lamentably drag'd to pieces. I have endeavoured to demonstrate, that dogmaticalness and paralytick scepticisme, are but the *Apocrypha* of true Religion; and I believe the one begets the other, as a toad begets a cockatrice: For the Sceptick perceiving, that the magisterial Dogmatist erres (as these must erre somewhere who assert too much) even in these things whereof he affirms, he is as sure as of any principle in Religion, (which is their ordinary stile) he finding out their error in one of their principles, is thereby emboldned to contravert all. This being the scope of this Essay, I wish that these who read it would expound it as Divines do parables, *Quæ non sunt argumentativa ultra sunum scopum.*

CHAP.

Chap. XXI.

The Authors Apology.

I Doubt not but some will think me no less absurd in writing against vanity, whilst I am so vain my self as to write Books, then the Philosophers were judged of old, for denying motion whilst their tongues mov'd in their cheeks; but, to these my answer shall be, that finding many groveling in their errors, I have, in this Essay, proffer'd them my assistance, not to shew my *strength* but my *compassion*. The multitude (which albeit it hath ever been allowed many heads, yet was never allowed any brains) will doubtless accuse my Studies of adultery, for hugging contemplations so excentrick to my employment; to these my return is, that these papers are but the pairings of my other Studies, and because they were but pairings, I have flung them out into the streets. I wrote them in my retirements when I wanted both books and employment, and I resolve that this shall be the

last inroad I shall ever make into forreign contemplations. There are some thoughts in this piece which may seem to rebell against the empire of the Schools; yet, who knows but my Watch goes right, albeit it agree not with the publick Clock of the City, especially where the sun of Righteousness hath not, by pointing clearly the dyal of Faith, shewed which of the two are in the error? There are some expressions in it, which censure may force to speak otherwayes then they have in commission; yet none of them got room in this Discourse, untill they first gave an account of their design to a most pious and learned Divine: and so, it may be the lines are of themselves streight, albeit they lye not paralled with each censurers crooked rule. As this Discourse intends, for the Divines of our Church, all respect; so all that is in it, is most freely submitted to their censure.

The Author intended this Discourse only as an introduction to the Stoicks Morals, *but probably, he will, for many years, stop here.*

POST-

POSTCRIPT.

BY the Laws of this Country p. 321 and elſewhere, the Author means that Religion which is ſetled by Law. In other Expreſſions the Author recommends himſelf to the gloſs of the readers charity.

The Contents of the Chapters.

Chap.	Pag.
I. *Of Atheisme*	1.
II. *Of Superstition*	17.
III. *Of the Worlds Creation*	21.
IV. *Of Eternity*	24.
V. *Of Providence*	26.
VI. *Of Theology*	38.
VII. *Of the strictness of Churches*	46.
VIII. *Of the Scriptures*	62.
IX. *Of the Moral Law*	72.
X. *Of the Judicial Law*	77.
XI. *Of Monsters*	87.

Chap.

The Contents.

CHAP. Pag.

XII. *Of man and his Creation* 93.

XIII. *Of the Immortality of the Soul* 97.

XIV. *Of Faith and Reason* 110.

XV. *Of the fall of Angels, and what their sin was* 114.

XVI. *Of Mans fall* 119.

XVII. *Of the stile of Genesis* 129.

XVIII. *Why man fell* 131.

XIX. *A refutation of the Millenaries* 133.

XX. *The Authors censure of this Essay, and an Account of his design* 136.

XXI. *The Authors Apology* 143.

FINIS.